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ROBERT C. MACKIE, *Editor*

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EDITORIAL

Democracy in the Federation

Democracy begins at home. While its interpretation is perhaps the major issue within the United Nations, its practice is under discussion in the World's Student Christian Federation. In General Committee meetings after the 1914-1918 War, at St. Beatenberg, Peking, and High Leigh there were rumblings of discontent about the democratic structure and expression of the Federation; and such rumblings were not absent at the General Committee meeting of 1946 at the Château de Bossey! It may help us therefore in our study of democracy in general to see how it works amongst ourselves; just as we shall certainly find illumination for our own problems by studying the wider issues as depicted in the articles which follow.

It should further be noted that this interest in democracy within the Federation is not restricted to the comparatively small number of people who actually attend its committees and conferences. It is part of a widespread desire amongst students that the Federation should demonstrate the possibilities of a democratic community in the international setting. This is an extremely important task, with which, not only a few Federation leaders, but all the members of all the national movements should be concerned.

An American student visiting Europe last summer, discovered for the first time that the French title of the World's Student Christian Federation was Fédération Universelle des Associations Chrétiennes d'Etudiants, and therefore that the W.S.C.F. is not a world movement of students, but a Federation of national student Christian movements. Certainly the French language is more precise; and it is important to realise that the Federation, as a democratically constituted body, is concerned, in its organisation, with national units and, in the conduct of its business, with national representatives. It therefore encounters its first difficulty in the different conceptions of democracy current in different countries.

Some years ago a European leader was tentatively asked if he would become chairman of the Federation. His instant reaction was: "Impossible! Procedure is Anglo-Saxon!" That is perhaps the unspoken opinion of the majority of the members of any meeting of the General Committee of the Federation. The whole performance of discussion and decision is carried out, not only too much in the English language, but too definitely in an Anglo-Saxon form. It does not help matters to point out that English has become, regrettably perhaps, by far the most generally useful international language, and that the absence of rules in discussion would result in confusion. The fact remains that any form of democratic procedure, designed to enable everyone to take part on an equal footing, may, unless great care is taken, make active participation in public discussion next to impossible for those to whom it is strange.

But it would be a mistake to conclude that there is an Anglo-Saxon procedure! The General Secretary of the British S.C.M. once found himself in the chair of an important discussion on the future of the Student Volunteer Movement in the U.S.A. He had been chosen because of his impeccable impartiality! At what seemed to him a suitable moment he remarked: "Well, it would appear that we are all agreed on this course of action, and we might as well pass on to the next point." Never will he forget the

horror depicted on the faces of those in front of him, and the awed voice which said in broken accents : "You can't do that, no one has made a proposition!" He would certainly have "got away with it" in a British meeting, because the Quaker habit of feeling for "the sense of the meeting" seems to have commended itself widely in British S.C.M. circles. Indeed one might say that in Britain no one would think of voting on a really important issue, while in corresponding American circles a vote would be essential to give the final touch to any vital decision!

Take another interesting distinction. In any Federation discussion a Dutchman and an American will be amongst the most forceful speakers, but they will frequently exasperate one another. The university man from the Netherlands has been trained to defend a thesis and he will speak with conviction and dogmatism. He expects to be opposed, and it is not his fault if others relapse into indignant silence after he has spoken! The American student, on the other hand, has had practice in public speaking and always uses his own language, so that he makes his point ably but in a framework and idiom which is elusive to others, and often leaves a sense of irritation behind, to his intense surprise!

Then, there is the distinction between those who believe that resolutions are of importance in expressing truth and influencing opinion, and those who find them distasteful and useless. Again this is largely a question of background. There are countries where the spoken word in Christian circles may influence public policy, and others where it has no relevance at all. There are minority, colonial and generally dominated situations where the spoken word seems to be the only means of action available, and there are other more favoured situations where everything seems to have been said before so often and to no purpose. More fundamental still are the many shades of opinion as to what Christians should talk about when they meet! But that is another question.

Of course the vast majority of the members of national student Christian movements never meet the members of other national movements at all. The privilege of attending

an international committee or conference is bound to remain the privilege of the few. The General Committee of the Federation will not meet again until 1949; the Executive Committee, which is meeting in July this year, numbers, basically, only a dozen people. Even the Oslo World Conference of Christian Youth will only have a hundred and fifty members and leaders of national movements present in that capacity, though others will certainly come within the membership of Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A. and Church groups. The places at the Lundsberg Federation Conference, which follows Oslo, are limited to just over two hundred. Yet these students will have been selected by others, and will come in a representative capacity. They will speak and plan for thousands of their fellows, they will take back impressions that will be widespread in their influence and the discussions in which they engage will profoundly affect the general direction of the Federation's life. Therefore it is of the first importance that both those who stay at home, and those who travel abroad, should understand the organisation of the Federation, and the particular points at which its claim to be democratic will be tested.

A primary characteristic of the Federation is that there is no stereotyped pattern for national movements. They have developed in particular national and university situations the organisation which suits their situations. In the Federation they are expected to be themselves and to maintain their own special interests and emphases. It is important therefore that national movements should discover the Federation to be the kind of fellowship in which they can naturally express their deepest convictions and learn from the convictions of others. This is the only true basis for any policies which the Federation itself may develop.

A second characteristic of the Federation is that it is composed of student movements, and it must never degenerate into a coterie of those who work amongst students. There are wise counsels in the Standing Orders about the proportion of students at a General Committee meeting, and the insistence that Federation conferences should be primarily student conferences is most important. On the

other hand national movements must be given liberty to send to meetings the people they consider most fitted to represent them, whether students or not. One of the happy circumstances of student Christian work, at any rate in smaller movements, is the absence of rigid distinctions between ages, or between students and professional workers. Continuity is sometimes more vital for democracy than change.

Thirdly, and perhaps most important of all in the Federation, there is the necessity of a proper balance between the nations or the continents. The sharpest test of the next year of two, for example, will not be whether student opinion is being expressed in the Federation, but whether the Federation can avoid all imputation of being Western or European. This will not be achieved so much by running about the world to find new meeting places or by constantly bringing new groups of students together, but by ensuring that, wherever and however the Federation meets, it thinks in world Christian categories. We must at all costs avoid speaking or acting as if we thought that there was somewhere a main store of Christian truth with only branch establishments in other parts of the world. In other words the real test of democracy in the Federation is not whether the student majorities are being articulate but whether the Christian minorities are being given their full opportunity to contribute. It is not an easy test to pass, as the editor of *The Student World* is well aware!

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So far we have assumed that the Federation is meant to be a democratic institution. The assumption is justified because it has been so constructed from the very beginning. The six foundation members in 1895 represented already existing national movements and set out immediately to create others. A Federation depends upon its units, and must serve them. But there is another sense in which democracy within the Christian Church must always be tested by more fundamental considerations. The founding

members set down the great religious purposes of the Federation, and democratic procedure is only of interest as it serves to carry them out. The significant thing about the members of the World's Student Christian Federation is not only that they are part of a great international fellowship, but that they are part of the One Church of God. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond or free, there is neither male nor female : for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." The basis of our democracy in the Federation is not Western, it is certainly not Anglo-Saxon ; it is our membership of Christ Himself. If there are attitudes, procedures, and situations in the Federation today which virtually deny that common bond of membership, we must continually seek them out and endeavour to change them, in the name, not of democracy, but of Christ.

R.C.M.

We would draw the reader's attention to a new publication of the World's Student Christian Federation, "Christian Witness in the Resistance", Experiences of Some Members of European Student Christian Movements, which may be obtained from 13, rue Calvin or national S.C.M.s for two Swiss francs or the equivalent. It has a direct bearing upon this discussion of democracy.

The Origins of Western Democracy

IAN CROMBIE

We are still in a muddle about progress. There is the nineteenth century optimism which (we are told) tended to see history as a record of spiritual achievement ; and there is the twentieth century pessimism which regards it as a blundering from catastrophe to catastrophe. Neither of these views, in itself, baldly stated, seems right, but one or other of them tends to influence our thought. Everything must be either good or bad ; democracy must be a noble vision or a noisy nightmare ; communism must be the great goal of all our energies, or the great Chimaera which seduces us to the denial of all that is good in European achievement.

We have got to get rid of excessive moralising about history. Of course we may ask whether this development is good, whether this social arrangement is better than that. But such questions have still got too much of a monopoly. There are also questions about what is possible in this situation, or what is the cause of this other.

One can account for the origins of Western democracy in many ways ; it has grown from the great thoughts and spiritual achievements of the seventeenth century in England and the eighteenth century in France ; or, with the Marxists, it is all a matter of concessions by the ruling classes in minor affairs in order to retain their grasp on the true sources of power, deceiving the masses, by the grant of suffrage, into believing themselves free to run their own lives ; or, with the Francoites, we are democratic because we have ceased to care about important things, finding we have more time and energy for

the pursuit of bread and circuses if we let every man go to Hell his own way. But if we are to understand what goes on in history, and are not to fall apart into uncomprehending and intolerant camps, we must give up the simple habit of choosing between such views as these.

Particular problems in particular situations

Men do think about social affairs and their thoughts do have their influence. But they think in particular situations, about problems posed by their own times. Their thought can become effective only as it finds other men to whom their conclusions matter. That depends on past thoughts and traditions, in part, but also on economic facts, and on intangible spiritual and cultural conditions. Human affairs do not advance smoothly along the chain of logic from premisses to conclusion, nor is thought irrelevant to their development. Again it is likely enough that much attention to some aspect of human life will lead to neglect of others. Concern for political justice is likely to allow economic affairs to slide unnoticed into the hands of avarice (as happened perhaps in Periclean Athens and seventeenth century England). The solution of one problem, in this way, will lead to the posing of another. The problem we stand a chance of solving to-day is the problem which our contemporaries care about, and that is the problem which is touching their daily lives — it may be arbitrary arrest, it may be unemployment, it may be spiritual and cultural barrenness. On the whole we do and must attend to the one problem which past history and present position push into the forefront — just as the individual tends to excel in one side of life at the expense of others. Again the "solution" of the historical problem, which we achieve, is not the same as the solution of the intellectual problem. The outcome of the seventeenth century disturbances was very different from the aims of the disturbers. Our ignorance makes us misconceive the intellectual problem, and the rough accidents of history (say Charles' affection

for Strafford) may distort our attempts to settle it. What ultimately happens however will shelve the old problem, and, after an interval of complacency and contentment, produce another.

The origin of the democratic ideal

If we want to share the blessings of Western democracy, we must look into its origins. From what has been said, it follows that such an investigation is not a study in the history of thought nor of that of mere events; it is something of both, or rather thoughts are themselves historical events. The word "democracy" shelters a multitude of ambiguities — notoriously. There is the sense in which Britain is a democracy, and the sense in which our class distinctions, or the power of Unilevers, are undemocratic. There is "economic democracy", "social democracy", "political democracy". These — and the other senses seem to hang together in this sort of way: — to say of anything that it is democratic seems to mean that it is a fair expression, in terms of historical life, of a part of the democratic ideal. An investigation into the origin of Western democracy is therefore an investigation into the origin of the democratic ideal, and, at the same time, into how this or that expression of it has come to be thought feasible, and has been achieved.

The democratic ideal, I suppose, is roughly this, that all men are at bottom equal and that no man has greater *prima facie* claims for power or wealth or respect than any other, and that those who get greater shares should only do so to enable them to perform, or to reward them for having performed, functions in society. It is as an offence against this ideal (which is of course one among others, such as the theocratic or aristocratic ideals) that, for instance, class distinctions are undemocratic. But Western democracy has come to mean, not all this, but rather the "fundamental liberties" and majority rule. Our problem, therefore, may be said to be "How is it that the *constitutional* realisation of the democratic ideal has become

to be thought by us the centre of the democratic business? How have we come to value and to achieve stable *political* democracy?"

The origin of an ideal is twofold ; first the intellectual sources, second the conditions which made it acceptable. The democratic ideal is not, let us repeat, theories about the consent of the governed, but a conception of right human relationships, which were at one time thought to find political expression in the sort of organisation about which consent phraseology could plausibly be used. Its intellectual ancestry goes right back to Greek, Roman and Jewish sources, and in spite of all historical differences due to *historical* differences, it is a common *philosophical* inheritance of Christian Europe (as opposed for instance to Confucian China or Inca Peru). The Greek contribution is not only the actual arrangements of states like Athens. No doubt among the Teutonic tribes and elsewhere there have been small-scale democratic organisations which have left no traces on political thought. More importantly the Greek contribution is the scientific habit of classification, of treating particulars as instances of a universal. Pisistratus, too, is a man ; why then should he receive pre-eminent honour ? Aristotle's justification of slavery contains seeds of democracy, in the very fact that the institution must be justified. Because men are naturally unequal in ability, slavery is a convenient arrangement. Once think in this way, and historical change may in time throw doubt on the empirical statement that the inequalities cannot be removed (for instance by education acts). From Stoic sources, and from Roman law, we have again the universalising tendency which is of the essence of a legal system. Law concerns itself with *cases*, or instances of general rules. Roman organisation was efficient because it was conceived, not in terms of arbitrary despotic whim, but, ruthless and tyrannical as it might be, none the less in terms of law. So we find such doctrines as Ulpian's *quod ad ius naturale pertinet, omnes homines sunt aequales*. The Hebrew-Christian contribution of the Fatherhood of the

one God, who hath put down the mighty from their seat and slain mighty kings, is too obvious to need emphasis. Neither Greece nor Rome nor Jewry were democracies. The Athenian slave had the political liberty of the American Negro in the Southern States ; the provincials in the Roman Empire were at times the victims of the most ruthless exploitation ; the gospels suggest that liberty of conscience was not secure in Jerusalem. But, none the less, the Socratic application of scientific classification to human affairs, the Roman conception of law and Jewish-Christian monotheism go together to create the democratic ideal in Christian Europe.

The growth of the democratic ideal in England

It is a mistake to suppose that this ideal lay dormant until the seventeenth century, when it began to come to birth in England. What happened then was that, for many reasons, it seemed practical politics to make advances towards political democracy. The ideal recurs throughout Christian political theory. What is missing is the settled conditions in which many democratic practices could be established. Even in the feudal middle ages there is much democracy, though not in the political sphere. There is the guild and village organisation which so appeal to our romantics ; there is the democratic fact that a low-born boy like William of Wykeham could, by becoming a bishop, achieve pre-eminent authority (a head-line matter to-day). There is something democratic about papal pretensions themselves (or the coronation of sovereigns), since they amount to a claim that the representative of morality must, by virtue of that very position, whoever he is in origin and person, exact the obedience of princes. It is perhaps no more misleading than other such generalisations to represent the dark and early middle ages as a period during which the church struggled, against a background of extreme political and even ethnic fluidity, to preserve, and re-apply in different circumstances, the Roman Christian civilisation. Because

it was a conscious endeavour on the part of the church to preserve standards, there is always present in practice a theocratic tendency, which, in more settled conditions, remains as an undemocratic hangover, hardening in some places (such as the mind of James I) into a theocratic ideal.

The democratic ideal, then, has deep roots in European tradition. The growth of democracy is not so much a history of spiritual achievement in the hammering out of a new conception of human dignity ; it is rather the realisation that new conditions demanded its actualisation in new ways. Feudal magnates no longer fulfilled their protective function, so the justification of that inequality had gone.

But the intellectual acknowledgement that times had changed was not all. There had to be also the historical forces capable of sustaining that realisation. Compare France and England in the seventeenth century. The significant difference in England lies in two things, first the mass of facts, some accidental, some deliberate (some connected with the independence of the English character, some with Edward III's wars or Henry VIII's wives), which had given Parliament a certain conception of its own position ; and secondly the existence of a powerful mercantile class which resented the position of the old aristocracy. No doubt there were Frenchmen who knew that times had changed but their weapon was not to hand ; in England it was.

The building up of Western democracy

Who can assess the contribution of innumerable historical events to the building up of Western democracy ? George I's ignorance of English and the beginnings of the cabinet ; the vapidty of the French court at its end ; Voltaire's genius ; Charles I's carelessness about promises ; George III's views on rebellious colonists. But among this welter of events, some things stand out as ranges among the peaks. Firstly, the long misery of the religious

wars and their contribution, through exhaustion, to the view that, if toleration led to all manner of spiritual evil, it still led to less than the Thirty Years' War. Secondly, the existence of mercantile classes, anxious to assert themselves against the pride of the aristocracy, and relying on assertions of natural right. Thirdly, the achievement of sufficiently high economic standards for there to be sizeable sections of society anxious about other things than daily bread; and at the same time making possible communications good enough to break down prejudice and insist on the enforcement of law and order (as General Wade's roads helped to destroy the clan system in the Highlands).

It would be mean-spirited to deny the presence in all this of the courage or idealism of Pymys, Eliots, Hampdens, and of village Hampdens too. But in our incredibly complicated modern conditions, if we are to have balanced views on the conflict of East and West, we must consider other strands in the rope of Western political achievement. It is not a straightforward story of spiritual advance. Much that is good has come from questionable sources. In the sixteenth century, the battle against usury and avarice was finally lost, and with it much of the colour of the mediaeval achievement passed out of the European tradition. But without that defeat of a valid and honourable cause (which Socialism today is championing again in a new form) there would have been no strong mercantile class to defend the thesis that the feudal magnate was useless lumber. Again Laud was a sincere defender of the rights of the commons; but at his period it was the rights of the trading classes that could be secured. His contribution is therefore negative; that is to say, in hardening the opposition to himself and Charles.

The importance of political democracy

A further example of the intertwining of the reputable and disreputable in the growth of democracy will bring out an important point. Western democracy, as we have said, is based on constitutionalism and majority rule. Now the political is indeed one among other sides of communal life — for instance the economic and the social or cultural. In itself, the political is perhaps the least important side; the lack of food or of fraternity are perhaps more demoralising than the lack of the vote. But, from the point of view of stability, political democracy is pre-eminently important, because it allows the ventilation of abuses, and their gradual removal, because it can reform itself. Yet, because it is in itself the least important side, the achieving of political democracy is dependent upon a tolerable state of affairs in the economic and social-cultural sides. In Weimar Germany a cultural atmosphere of defeat and frustration, and an economic state of inflation and unemployment, led to the collapse of political democracy (not only the mushroom Weimar achievement, but the work of centuries as well). Our political democracy, therefore, indeed enables us to remedy social and economic tyranny — one can mock and denounce such things with impunity — but none the less it depends on the maintenance of tolerable social and economic standards. To care about constitutionalism one must neither be exasperated beyond endurance by the insolence of one's betters, nor oppressed by gross economic insecurity. But our standard of living has drawn strength from the slave trade, from the exploitation of native races, from ruthless commercialism all over the world. So, in the whirligig of time, the slave trade helps us to be in a position to lecture the Russians about Polish elections.

This has been a summary and dogmatic treatment. It has sought to illustrate these points. Investigation of the origins of political achievement is the investigation

of the growth of ideas out of each other, and of the development of conditions in which they become, first applicable, and then popular. That development depends in part upon the ideas, and their own power, and partly upon brute facts such as climate and the characters of kings. That in so far as men do think about, and solve, their problems, the problem they solve to-day is the one that is relevant to-day, and creates further problems to-morrow. That the solutions achieved, having gone through the mill of ignorance and accidents, look very unlike the solutions intended (as Caroline and Cromwellian despotism led to toleration); and that good comes out of evil and evil out of good. There is nothing simple about the process by which democracy has grown or about that by which it may be spread.

India Seeks Democracy

M. M. THOMAS

I. A historical Survey

India's search for democracy is not different from her struggle for national freedom from British imperialism. Hence an attempt is here made to sketch briefly the ideological history of the Indian National Movement and to examine its content.

Though the Indian National Congress has been, and still remains, the foremost national organisation, Indian nationalism does not start with the Congress, nor is the Congress its sole expression. Historians of the Indian National Movement speak of four ideological epochs in its history.

They were the liberals

Ram Mohan Roy represents the first period. The semi-official historian of the Congress calls him "the prophet of Indian Nationalism and the Father of Modern India". Living in the first half of the 19th century he worked for a social, religious and cultural renaissance. Both liberal Christianity and the French Revolution influenced him a good deal. He founded the *Brahmo Samaj* which sought to liberalise Hinduism and put an ethical, perhaps we should say a liberal Christian, content in it. His devotion to the principles of the French Revolution was such that once at the Cape of Good Hope, he insisted on being carried to a French vessel where he saw the flag of liberty flying, so that he might be able to do homage to this flag, and when he saw it he shouted : "Glory, glory, glory to the flag". He sought

to eliminate polytheism, idolatry and polygamy and fought relentlessly for the abolishment of glaring social evils. His fight for the freedom of the press was no less remarkable. And it was due to his efforts that Western learning was introduced in the country.

The liberal nationalism symbolised in Ram Mohan Roy no doubt looked to the Occident for its inspiration ; and the National Congress which was founded in 1885 was an expression of this liberalism which had already become the common ideology of the educated middle class. Congress in these days consisted of "picked men of the legal, medical, engineering and literary profession all over India" and represented the "aristocracy of intellect". The presidential addresses for years breathed their passion for a democracy on the pattern of the British, and they believed that it was England's intention to build up in India such a democracy. The Congress offered its cooperation in that endeavour. Had not Britain abolished *sati*¹ with the support of Ram Mohan Roy ? They reiterated in session after session "that the Congress was essentially loyal to the British Throne and fell foul only of the Indian bureaucracy, that the English constitution was the bulwark of popular liberties everywhere and the English parliament was the mother of democracy all over, that the British constitution was the best of all constitutions" and pleaded with a liberal Britain to recognise that the educated people of India "are the friends and not the foe of England — her natural and necessary allies in the great work that lies before her". This faith in the liberalism of British democracy was such that the most important organ of the National Congress was conceived to be its London Committee, seeking to make English statesmen realise the "un-British" character of British rule in India.

The Congress, in the spirit of Ram Mohan Roy, carried on work for social reform, for enlightenment, for

¹ A custom requiring a widow to immolate herself on her husband's funeral pyre.

education and for the freedom of science and religion from obscurantism. The social conference under the leadership of Ranade was an adjunct to the Congress for many years. Though divorced from the people as a whole, they considered it their duty to "interpret their grievances and offer suggestions for their redress". Gokhale may be considered the last among the noted liberals, who in his latter years bitterly complained that "the bureaucracy was being frankly selfish and openly hostile to national aspirations. It was not so in the past". As they found that bourgeois democracy in the West could not create world democracy, and was becoming more and more aggressive in Asia, the liberal idea weakened and ceased to have any hold on the congress. The Servants of India Society which Gokhale organised as "an order of political workers", and the Liberal Federation formed in 1918 continued the liberal ideology in political service, but more or less outside the main current of the Indian National Movement.

Nationalism emerges

The occidental orientation of the Indian National Congress ceased with the rise of what is called "nationalism", of which Bala Gangadara Tilak may be considered the representative leader. From Sir P. Mehta's "unbounded faith in the living and fertilizing principles of English culture and English education", the Congress had travelled a long way and had decided now to take a right about turn. The *Arya Samaj* and the Theosophical Society based on a conception of the superiority of the "Aryan" religion and philosophy over the Western, reacted against the *Brahmo Samaj* and set the trail. Politics followed. Against the overwhelming flood of British bourgeois ideology, which they saw completely conquering the intellectuals of India, and which they found in practice to have no force against the exploiting foreigner, the new leaders pitted a revived Hindu orthodoxy, which was socially reactionary. We see the signal

of the emergence of this combination of political radicalism with social conservatism in Tilak's ferocious campaign in 1890 against a bill which sought to raise the age of consummation of marriage from ten to twelve and which was supported by the old guard of the Congress like Ranade. He revived the memory of *Shivaji* and organised festivals in honour of the elephant-headed god *Ganesh*. In Bengal the cult of *Kali*, the goddess of destruction, was actively developed by some of the ardent nationalists. They supported in the name of nationalism all superstition, caste, privilege and all the black vices seeking to hold down the oppressed in the Hindu society.

Russian defeat at the hands of Asiatic Japan had a lot to do with the new spirit in India. The political slogans of the 1905 congress, meeting in the wake of the agitation against the partition of Bengal, were *Swadeshi* (Nationalism), Boycott and National Education, and in 1906, *Swaraj* (self-government) was added to it. Against the old guard who looked to the liberal party in England, Tilak called for "self-help, determination, and sacrifice" and declared *Swaraj* as "my birth-right"; and among the "patriarchs" of the National Congress, Tilak is the one man who was most feared and persecuted by the bureaucracy. The nationalist youth who rallied round the new slogans, were as much divorced from the real interests of the people as the liberals were, and found no technique of political action other than individual terrorism. One may very well agree with Nehru in saying that, "socially speaking", the renewal of the Indian nationalism in this period was "definitely reactionary"; nevertheless it was an attempt to put substance into freedom and give orientation to it when the liberal bourgeois concept of freedom broke down, in the face of the growing British imperialist power. In that sense it must be understood as an attempt to seek within the national tradition the destiny of a people in search after freedom-in-responsibility; it was an irrational search for the essence of democracy.

Seeking democracy under the Mahatma

The conscious search for the essence of democracy began with the Gandhian era. Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa to his mother country on the eve of the first World War and in the post-war years Indian nationalism was more or less based on Gandhian leadership and ideology. For over a decade he represented in himself the march of the common man in India in search of his destiny.

In the first World War the nationalist leaders had cooperated whole-heartedly with the British, who proclaimed that they were fighting to "make the world safe for democracy" and promised freedom to India after the war. When the war came to an end the people of India hoped for freedom; and the victorious Russian revolution and the rising determination of Asia to throw off the Western yoke added a new glow to their hope. But the answer India got from Britain was the continuation of Defence of India Rules and the massacre of the innocent in Punjab. It was at this time that Gandhiji came forward with his new non-violent technique of mass struggle, which had as its motto "fearlessness". It awoke the people to a new sense of self-respect, not to "bend one's knees before insolent might", and suffer the consequences patiently. Gandhiji gave a channel for the new nationalist upsurge — a technique to challenge the might of the government in power. The Civil Disobedience Movements he led in 1920 and 1930, in which thousands of men and women courted imprisonment and faced bullets voluntarily and boldly, have taught the nation that *Swaraj* comes only by developing self-respect and courage through suffering and sacrifice.

With the rise of Gandhiji to leadership of the nation in 1919, he called the National Congress to put democratic content into *Swaraj* by self-purification, selfless constructive service in the villages and identification with the poor. It was a small matter to Gandhiji whether the Congress had clarity about the political end it

was seeking ; all emphasis was laid on what the Congress did "today". He called the nation to real constructive activity in the villages and kept the constructive programme "in the forefront of the national programme", for which he demanded "the largest part of the nation's time and attention". *Swaraj*, he said, is the end. "For me it is enough to know the means ; means and ends are convertible terms in my philosophy of life". The Congress changed the venue of its annual sessions from the city to the villages and began to sponsor huge All-India organisations to channel the forces released by nationalism to the villages. The All-India Village Industries Association, the *Harijan Seva Sangh*, the *Hindu Prachar Sabha*, the *Kasturba Memorial Fund* for work among women, the Society for spread of the Wardha Scheme of Education and many other societies became adjuncts of the Congress. Great impetus was given to movements for prohibition, establishment of national schools (*Vidyapiths*), to the ideas of village *panchayats* and Hindu-Muslim Unity. Civil Disobedience and other programmes of direct political action were conceived as fit to be undertaken only by people disciplined in the school of *Satya* (truth), *Ahimsa* (non-violence) and *Swadeshi* (love of the neighbourhood) through constructive activity. In 1924 the Congress even made handspinning of two thousand yards of yarn a month a condition of membership in the Congress. Handspun handwoven *Khadi* became the national dress. It was a small matter to Gandhiji whether he remained in the Congress or not. He did go out in 1934 and today remains outside, concentrating on constructive work "with the help of the Congress and in its name". The nation owes it to Gandhiji that the Congress has become an organisation of the people of India — the voice of the subdued millions.

Towards a new social democracy

Left nationalism emerged in the nineteen twenties and grew with the march of time. Pandit Nehru was its spokesman within the Congress in the twenties and thirties. The first signal of it was given as early as 1908 when the Bombay Mill workers struck work in protest against the imprisonment of Tilak. But it needed the post-war period of tension and the 1920 non-cooperation movement to bring it to its own consciousness. Socialist ideas began to penetrate the youth of the Congress and influence Congress politics. In its wave, a left wing emerged as the Independence League within the Congress as a critique of Gandhian ideology and leadership. Later the Congress socialists and communists organised themselves to lead this nationalism. Left nationalism took its inspiration from the Russian Revolution and sought to base its political technique on marxism.

This new nationalism had its own ideology of the New Indian Democracy, at first vaguely defined but becoming more definite as the industrial workers and peasants became more and more organised and vocal in politics. Nehru looked at democracy from the point of the people who were living on an average income of two annas (twopence) per day and he defined democracy as that society where the people have come to their own. He looked at the problems of India with that end in view and nothing else, and to his mind, the many problems of India resolved themselves into opposition to social change. Nehru says: "All our present-day problems in India — the communal or the minority problem, the Indian princes, vested interests of religious groups and of landowners and the entrenched interests of British authority and industry in India — ultimately resolve themselves into opposition to social change". The leftists maintained that the Congress should put social content into their conception of freedom, if it cared for national freedom, and demanded

that it should work for freedom in such a radical way that in the process the people may shake off all their fetters in which the semi-feudal and semi-colonial society have chained them.

Left nationalism has always respected Mahatma Gandhi as the Father of the nation, but it is critical of his ideology and programme. They see clearly, even as Gandhi himself does, what the machine has done to destroy the old village structure of India, but they do not regret that destruction. On the other hand to them it has been the "historical mission" and value of imperialism. But they know also that nothing positive can replace the old so long as India remains within the imperialist structure; a scientific civilisation with a richer social content for the people can come into being only as the people of India throw off the yoke of imperialism and build on their own. The machine has come to stay and democracy lies not in saying "no" to the machine but in democratising it, in welcoming the machine and making it responsible to the people.

As the industrial workers and *ryots* (peasants) were getting better organised and more politically conscious, Gandhiji turned the attention of the Congress more and more from politics to constructive activity and confined political action whenever it was thought necessary to *satyagraha* of himself and his chosen few; and latterly he and the Congress leadership have outlawed almost all strike action by the workers and peasants. Therefore left nationalism maintains that fear of the people has become the basis of the political philosophy of those hiding behind Gandhian *satya* and *ahimsa*. It is this that left nationalism has been fighting from the beginning. They see in the release of the peoples' forces the only way to national freedom, social change and social democracy.

In this fight against compromise Pandit Nehru took the lead in the early days though later he was over and over again won over by Gandhiji to his side by his powerful personal charm. Being an ardent anti-imperialist and having a social democratic content to his

conception of freedom, he has, however, maintained a warm corner for the leftists. In the twenties the leftists got the aim of the Congress changed from an undefined *Swaraj* to *Purna Swaraj* (complete independence). They protested against the compromise of the Gandhiji-Irwin pact which called off the 1930 non-cooperation movement at a time when in the words of Gandhiji himself it was "showing no signs of slackening". Though Nehru felt helpless before Gandhiji within the Congress, the nationalist sentiment was expressed by "the numerous resolutions from youth organisations and conferences and in the hostile demonstrations of Bombay workers against Gandhiji on his departure for the Round Table Conference". They procured in the 1931 Congress the adoption of a "Fundamental Rights resolution which included a basic democratic charter" with nationalisation of key industries and transport, labour rights and agrarian reform, which later has remained the basis of Congress election manifestoes and the working programme of the Congress ministries.

In 1934 Gandhiji left the Congress because of the ascendancy of socialist groups within it: "If they gain ascendancy in the Congress as well they may, I cannot remain in the Congress". With the growth of the political consciousness of workers under the Congress ministries, left nationalism took long strides. In 1938 the National Planning Committee was formed under Nehru's leadership which sought to plan the economy of India for a democracy on a national basis.

The present situation

The struggle within the Indian National Movement, all along, has been between people advocating a united front for an all-out anti-imperialism and the leaders seeking compromise with imperialism. During the war the nation passed through a crisis. In the post-war re-alignment of forces the gulf between the "united fronters" and the "compromisers" has become very wide.

The former led by the left nationalists hold that the one obstacle to unity between National Congress and the Muslim League is the unwillingness of the leaders of these two great organisations to say a final good-bye to imperialism ; they see the leaders in the last stages of the national struggle, as being more afraid of the people's united forces in freedom's struggle than of imperialism ; and in the leaders' preparedness for compromise imperialism finds a basis for playing its role of divide and rule. The leaders dub "Hindu and Muslim unity of the common people at the barricade" as "unholy", but left nationalism finds in this unity the only way out of the communal riots and for complete national freedom from imperialism. The left slogan is "Congress-League-Communist Unity for National Freedom". The compromisers shout back "anti-communism".

Today the compromisers in the Congress and League are seeking the help of imperialism and of the stooges of imperialism, like the princely order, to consolidate their position. This situation is reflected in the attempt, on the one hand, of the Congress leadership to work the Constituent Assembly organised within the scope of an Imperial Award, and composed of representatives elected on a thirteen per cent franchise in British India and of the nominees of the princes, and on the other, of the Moslem League leadership seeking its end of *pakistan* in direct bargain with imperialism, over against the Congress and the Constituent Assembly. The left see the growing Hindu-Moslem riot situation as in large measure due to the politics created by the policy of compromise of the bourgeois leadership.

That this policy of compromise is opposed by the people at large, is evident in the growing revolutionary upsurge of organised labour and peasants whom left nationalism leads. Five million people demobilised from the military, civil and allied occupations at the end of the war clamouring for jobs, which cannot be provided within the present system, create a revolutionary situation before which left nationalism sees only two alternatives

— either the policy of compromise will be broken and with it the semi-feudal and semi-colonial structure of society also, with the possibility of a new democracy opening up — or the compromisers will in alliance with bureaucracy, princes and imperialism try to save the present property relations through a new political form, certainly aggravating the communal situation on the one hand and leading to an increase of princely autocracy in the States and an all-round suppression of labour on the other.

The British Government seems to have seen these alternatives clearly. And the British Government's declaration of its new policy to "quit" by July 1948 has been motivated in their own words, by the anxiety to "stay" helping the imperialist allies in India with the consolidation of their position against the people. In the Parliamentary debate A. V. Alexander said : "As a result of the situation which has arisen after the war, there might have been an outbreak of revolution at any time. Ever since then this Government and its supporters had laboured incessantly to try to get an agreement with India which would avoid a great outburst of that kind."

Indian people in world politics

The interest of the Congress in foreign affairs began in the twenties of the present century. Ever since then, the indivisibility of democracy has been the creed of the Congress. Twelve years before the Second World War, the Congress made its position clear, taking its stand against the attempt of the great powers to isolate Russia and to crush the freedom movements of the Asiatic countries. The Congress reacted against Hitlerism on Hitler's rise to power, and took its clear stand again and again against the series of political and military episodes — Manchuria, Abyssinia, Spain, Sino-Japanese war, and Munich — which brought the war. One wonders whether any nation in the West has such a clean record against fascism. When the war started the Congress knew where

it stood and condemned Japanese militarism, nazism and fascism strongly. But the British Government in India proved to be too much of an irritant, and, when the Government struck the Congress, and clapped its leaders into jail, it created a spontaneous reaction of the people to which a part even of the leftists succumbed. But not all. A large body of organised labourers, peasants and students held a strong stand for true internationalism in the name of the indivisibility of democracy.

After the second World War the Congress, as such, was not concerned with the Anglo-Saxon-Soviet power politics. But the Indian delegation to the U.N.O. has opened the eyes of even the rightists within the Congress to the leftist truth. They found the Anglo-Saxon alliance behind the racialism of Field Marshal Smuts, while the Indian case was strongly supported by Russia and the Slav countries. The Indian delegation was instructed by the interim Government (which is in no sense pro-communist) to weigh every issue that came before the U.N.O. on its own merits without joining any bloc. The members of the delegation were far from leftists. But they found that on almost all issues the Trusteeship, the West African and the Veto and other questions, they were ranged on the side of the Soviet. They found that the Soviet was more "liberal" than the Anglo-Saxons and they returned to India and told the people so. The argument that the Soviet is liberal not out of idealism, but out of "interests", does not carry much weight with Indian nationalism, because the question it prompts is : why is it that Russia finds it in her "interests" to support liberal ideas of racial equality, the freedom movement of subject countries etc., when Anglo-Saxon "interests" cannot ? Does it not speak something very fundamental about the value of these "interests" for democracy ? Indian nationalism does not consider it a crime on its part to encourage the freedom movements of its neighbours in Asia or of the African peoples, for the Congress has always accepted it as a creed that democracy is indivisible. Herein lies the significance of the recent

Inter-Asian Conference, convened by Nehru, which has formed a permanent committee to work for the common cause of all the Asiatic peoples. Nor will India think it a crime on the part of "Soviet leadership" to encourage the Asiatic and other national movements. Indian people ask today whether the policy of isolation and encirclement of Russia, which brought about the last war, is going to be repeated in the post-war world. Recent events are compelling the Indian nation to enter power politics on the side of the Soviet, in the name of the democracy which India seeks and in the name of liberalism in politics.

II. A Christian Critique

The Indian Church as the Christian critique

No historical article in a journal of this kind should go without a Christian judgment pronounced on it. And Christian judgment is not merely judgment from a particular ideological point of view ; if it is to be real, it must be a theological judgment, that is, the news of what God has done to judge and redeem the very history of imperialism versus nationalism, which has been the subject of our historical survey. The history of the Christian Church in India is that act of God. And no historical survey of nationalism is truly historical, until it reckons with that other history beginning with St. Thomas the Apostle and continuing in the modern missionary movement, wherein is to be found the meaning both of imperialism and the national movement. The great new fact of modern India is that there is a People of God in India in daily conversation with the British imperialists and the Indian nationalists, calling them to a common decision to repent and enter the elect nation, the divine fulfilment of all that they seek, and seek amiss, outside it. The Church in India is the critique of the Indian National Movement.

The Church in India has presented to nationalism a stumbling block which is of the essence of the nature of Church. The liberalism of the early reformers, the orthodox Hinduism of Tilakian nationalism, the neo-hinduism of the Gandhian era and the marxism of the left have all reacted in some measure great or small against the fact that Christian faith should have come as a news from without and that imperialism could have been used in the providence of God for the spread of the Gospel and the building up of the Church in India. Some of them would gladly accept Christian ideas and ideals as true and incorporate them into their basic faith; but the historical community of the Church in India, standing on the news of an historical event outside India, and brought to India from outside, a news which refuses to be reduced to an ideology which could be absorbed, is the rock of offence. But the historical is of the very essence of the encounter with the personal God, and in opposing it, Indian nationalism reveals the principle of self-righteousness and the sovereignty of man, which are at the root of Indian nationalism, and judges itself.

Here I do not want to forget the fact that sometimes the Christian Church in India, seeing God using Western imperialism for the spread of the Gospel in India, has falsely interpreted it to mean that the missionary movement was a justification of imperialism and has sought to support imperialism. This has added a scandal of man to the scandal of God thus confusing the nationalist and blinding him from clearly seeing the offence of the gospel. If the missionary movement would justify and uphold imperialism, it was only right if some considered the struggle against imperialism as including opposition to the Christian missions also. But today, as the scandal of man is being removed, and Christians are sharing the passion for national freedom with their non-Christian brethren, the peril is that the Church may conform itself to nationalism and give up the scandal of particularism — of the good news of Christ crucified, of her history

through missions and of her election. The demand upon the Church in India is that it be the Church, that it may be a Christian critique of Indian nationalism.

The Church and the personal order

All conceptions of democracy, whether liberal, Gandhian or marxist, agree on one point, namely that responsible personal living is the end of social ordering and democratic planning. It is just here that the Church has to proclaim that whatever be the form of social ordering, there is no real human responsibility anywhere else except as man faces the scandal of God's election in Christ, and is called upon to decide; that it is only as man is seen as a sinner saved by Christ that man can be seen as a truly responsible being. The Church has to be uncompromising in its proclamation that responsible personal community is primarily and basically a gift of Grace in the Church, the people of God and not the result of the work of man. The Indian democracy will be a democracy of the "person" only in so far as the One Catholic Church sojourns in India as the ground of man's personal being, and exists as the centre of personal community within the social, political and economic orders — in tension with them, always witnessing to a human destiny beyond them. "I believe One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church".

It is here that the total content of the demand of the Church for religious freedom and its significance for democracy should be made clear to ourselves, that we may reason with our non-Christian brethren. Today Indian nationalism has granted Christians the right to practice and preach their religion, and the National Christian Council of India at its last triennial meeting in November 1946 "firmly believes that in a self-governing India, the Church in many ways, will be in a more advantageous position to give testimony by her life, service and teaching to the redeeming power of the Lord Jesus in personal, national and international life". But

this freedom has been granted by nationalism more or less as a concession to the demand of a minority group who as part of the Indian nation stood with them in their struggle for national freedom. This is to miss the meaning of religious freedom and will in the end lead to a curtailment of its content. It is the Christian duty to try to convince our brethren that a positive recognition by the political, economic and social orders that man has ends and loyalties beyond them is the only basis of personal freedom and responsible living in society ; and that religious freedom is therefore the essential basis of personal freedom and democracy.

Conversation with Indian nationalism

The claim of the Church, composed of less than two per cent of the peoples of India, composed of not many wise, not many strong and not many good, to be the bearer of personal community and hence of true democracy for all the four hundred millions of India places us on the side of the anti-liberalism of Gandhism and of left nationalism, and at the same time accentuates the Christian struggle with them on the plane of dogma into an irreconcilable conflict. In a Christian conversation with Gandhism and left nationalism, on the basis of democracy in a personal dimension beyond the functional, there are more points of contact with Gandhism than with left nationalism. This is because Gandhism recognises the relevance to a personal democracy of a spiritual order of *Brahmins* as a moral check against the misuse of power or assumption of totalitarian power by the *Shaktrias* of the state. Gandhism has posed a real question which cannot be answered by Gandhism itself. Here the Christian can affirm an answer that a just organisation of society or power in society is impossible, unless the society has within it the Church, the personal order founded on *agape* with its absolute denial of power, and recognised as the end of society ; and that the reality of the tension between the church and the state is the one guarantee

against totalitarianism. As marxism does not know any dimension above the functional, one cannot see any point of contact with left nationalism on this plane of dogma, except in absolute conflict.

Planning for justice

The Church cannot be a Christian critique of nationalism, if it reduces the gospel to a political ideology; nor can it be one, if it is non-political. If human personality is of Grace, man has responsibility to divinely ordained natural functions which are sacramental to personality and personal community. Though community is not the product of planning, community requires just planning of the organic and organisational aspects of man. The Church in India today is a Christian critique of nationalism in the measure in which it leads its members to realise their responsibility to the political order, and knows the power of the pardon of God, enabling it to remain a body uniting in the order of Grace people who have made their varied, perhaps contradictory, decisions as Christians in the freedom struggle of the nation, choosing between "sinful alternatives of relative compromises with the will to power".

In giving a political critique of nationalism, the writer is governed by his decision to strengthen the forces of left nationalism. As a Christian he is committed ultimately to a *personal* interpretation of social reality, but he keeps in tension with it, as the basis of his relative political judgments and political technique, the science of marxism and its organic interpretation of social history.

In saying "no" to the machine, Gandiji is not unlike those noble Christian souls of the West who have set themselves the task of building rural communities, as being the only bulwark against the forces of disintegration of the modern machine age. The writer has no doubt in his mind that such communities are necessary as a critique of the machine civilisation and as a protest against its death-dealing forces. Herein lies to his mind

the significance of the Christian *Asram* movement in India. But, when it is made the basis of the policy of a whole nation as Gandhism seeks to do, it turns out to be an "ideology" of the forces of reaction, as has been clearly shown by left nationalism in its criticism of Gandhism. The recognition of the reality of the dimension of natural necessity in history compels the writer to the conviction that the natural basis of Indian democracy can be laid, and a national planning for community living undertaken, only by strengthening the forces of left nationalism, led by the Communist Party of India.

The question for Christians in India is whether they know the power of the Resurrection enough to maintain in the unity of their Christian life a tragic tension between an absolute conflict with nationalism as religion and a relative cooperation with nationalism as politics. On the answer to this question hangs much more than the future of democracy in India.

Democracy Must Overcome Itself

HENRI HATZFELD

I wish to begin by telling you how the problem of democracy appears to a young man in France today. As a matter of fact I suppose that the word sounds differently according to the place one lives in, whether Moscow, London or New York. This then is the reaction of a young Frenchman reasonably well educated and fairly competent both in History and in Law, whenever he hears the word democracy.

For us the arrival of democracy is related to two things in particular : in the first place to a strong intellectual movement ; and in the second to the coming into power of a new class, young, active, vigorous, cultivated and already rich — the bourgeoisie. I leave it to the marxists to prove to us that the first of these factors is the mere reflection of the second on the intellectual plane, and that the thought of our “encyclopaedists” is but an ideological superstructure on the bourgeois revolution.

It would be a long process to discover in the thought of the French philosophers of the eighteenth century the different influences to which they were subject. That is the most confused period of our intellectual history. To put Rousseau and Voltaire, who loathed each other, in the same bag would surely make them turn in their graves ! And yet the *Contrat Social* of the one and the *Lettres Anglaises* or the *Dictionnaire Philosophique* of the other made an equal contribution to the new consciousness of man's destiny without which democracy would have been impossible. We must simply set by the side of other influences that of English thought, and not only

English thought but also the thought which gave rise to the young American democracy. The secret revenge of persecuted Protestantism in France was the political thought which grew out of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism, and which was to fight powerfully in our midst against the "*ancien régime*".

Freedom and Equality in France

Let us look at those ideas in the national thinking which were so widely diffused and which came from the fertile pen of our philosophers — Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, and with him all the men of the great Encyclopaedia, I refer to the scorn of traditional prejudices, both those of absolute monarchy and those of the Catholic religion; faith in human faculties, and particularly in reason. Let me quote to you this fable from Diderot: "One day, I said to them, a philosopher asked a man of the world: If the Opera ball lasted the whole year what do you think would happen?... What would happen would be that all the masks would get to know each other... Well, these masks are the symbols of our errors. Let us pray God that the ball may go on, and in the end they will all be recognised". The hope of men in those days was really to get to know the masks, to denounce errors and, as a result, to liberate man from the yoke of religious superstition and political arbitrariness. From this sprang the great and noble principle, the affirmation of our Declaration of the Rights of Man: "All men are born free and equal before the Law". Liberty — Equality. Only later does the third word of our motto appear, Fraternity. But the men of our country who fought against the ancient European autocracies and triumphed in the name of the Rights of Man charged the Austrian guns with these words on their lips: Liberty, Equality — or Death!

At the same time the bourgeoisie, who after centuries of development had reached a high degree of culture and of conscience, were showing in power all the nobility

which, under the authority of the last kings, had grown humdrum and insipid. In fact the Revolution of 1789 appears as the triumph of the people, of the Third Estate: bourgeois, workers, peasants. The triumph of the bourgeoisie was indisputable. Not less real was that of the peasants who benefited to a very large extent from the death of feudal privileges and the sale of the national estates. But it only took several decades for the worker to discover that the new democracy was doing nothing for him and bringing him nothing. The Third Estate which had won the victory over the nobility and the clergy became divided, and with very little victory about it, into three blocks: one, politically wiped out, the peasantry, and the two other rivals, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Enough ill is spoken nowadays — and with reason — about the bourgeoisie for us to need to take off our hats to the memory of the bourgeoisie of other days: that class of honest, industrious, enterprising people, well-informed in spite of the blinkers they wore, which was the glory of our nineteenth century. Friends, you will find no better apology for that class than in Balzac's novel *César Birotteau*. Here, however, are the facts. Industry developed at the same time as the city proletariat, and the bourgeoisie made its fortune at the expense of a new exploited class. Capitalism, on its way to further development, found the bourgeoisie in good condition for the economic struggle, and the people, the workers, handicapped and with no other wealth than their own right arms, whose strength and service they were forced to sell at any price offered them by the rich bourgeois purchaser. Marx has said all this and said it well. The democracy which was established by the Revolution of 1789 brought nothing to the class of workers, produced by industry, save an imaginary freedom and imaginary equality. At the moment when the Third Estate triumphed on the political plane a new fact brought into question the freedom and the equality which had been gained. The new capitalistic economy revealed a new form of

slavery and inequality. What was the importance of universal suffrage or civic rights, if in fact the proletariat was at the mercy of the employer? A statute of economic freedom and equality had yet to be discovered and secured without which political freedom and equality were only vain words.

From now on then in France the parties of the left, and the workers' parties in particular, were beginning a struggle for economic freedom and equality, which are today considered as the necessary conditions for a real democracy. The bourgeoisie as a whole was turning its thoughts to protecting its economic privileges just as the nobility which it supplanted had been intent on defending its feudal privileges. We may sum this all up simply by saying that the question has changed its form. Once the problem of political democracy has been solved, we have to face the problem of economic democracy as seen in the brutal opposition of communism and capitalism.

This is the way in which France, and perhaps many other countries on this old continent, are facing today the problem of democracy. But suppose a young Frenchman realises that a true democracy cannot exist without real economic equality and freedom, and suppose he is himself attracted by the solution of the left (socialism or communism), and suppose he turns his eyes to other countries — what does he see?

Democracy in America

In the United States of America, the capitalist country *par excellence*, a true democracy is to be seen. You remember the amazement of the men of the old world when they saw the American army with its obvious equality. That "army of mechanics", as we called it — what a lesson for us! What! Is the colonel no better dressed than the private soldier? And what about the officer class? Can wars really be won without that? Then people who come back from the other side of the Atlantic talk to us about a nation over there where the

millionaires wear the same suit of clothes as the journalistic hack, and where the same level of life and of culture produces an actual equality which is not seriously affected by differences of salary. Further it appears—and we gape with astonishment — that over there the office-boy may become the employer if he knows how to work and gives his mind to the business, that a modest origin is no kind of disqualification in the struggle for existence, that indeed there is no privileged class which keeps the labouring masses in a state of tutelage. I need not say that this idyllic vision is far from being confirmed by all that we know about the United States. But is not this the myth which today still dominates the political consciousness of the American man? A society where the classes are not ossified, a capitalist country where individual initiative and competition play their part, but where the opportunity at the start is the same for all, a country which may not perhaps possess refinements known by our privileged classes, but where the average level is quite clearly higher than the average level of the older nations. This is the country which forces us to reconsider our ideas of democracy. For this political democracy, which is not at all an economic democracy in the sense that we have just been discussing, is in fact a democracy in the sense that it assures to each individual the maximum of real freedom and equality.

And yet we are well aware that this country which is a democracy within is, seen from without, an authentic imperialism. Seen from without it is, for us old outworn nations, a constant menace of economic stranglehold, a menace which is but accentuated by that famous atomic bomb which hangs over our heads like a modern sword of Damocles. My American readers will allow me to put it this way. When the neighbour of a rich man's property is a poor devil growing his leeks in his own little garden, the poor devil knows very well that if the dividing wall happens to fall it will not mean that he becomes owner of the whole property. What is much more likely to happen in that case is that he will be given a cap and livery

to become the gamekeeper or the flunkey of the rich man. Friends, we are very much afraid that, overwhelmed with debts as we are, we shall wake up one fine day to find ourselves without any possessions. And we have no desire at all to be reduced in this way to your mercy.

I think that this is the way in which a good many of the inhabitants of this old continent would put it. Whoever we may be, conqueror or conquered, rich in colonial possessions or not, we have the feeling that we cannot stand against the competition of the United States. This old Europe of ours, split up, ruined, parcelled out and demoralised, has no resources for playing this game in which its economic independence is at stake. When we look at France we see the problem of democracy entangled with the problem of an economic régime, while if we look at America we see the problem of democracy tied up with the problem of international rivalry.

Democracy in Russia

If, instead of looking to the West, we turn our eyes to the East, to Russia, the prospect is still more alarming. About the year 1928 Russia had become the country to which were turning the hopes of those who considered that a democracy can only exist with real economic freedom and equality. About 1928 Russia had two ways open before it. Either it might embark upon the slow "socialist" education of an enormous backward people — a labour of long duration which would have condemned the U.S.S.R. to remain aloof from the great movement of the modern powers for many years, and would have left it without resources before all the imperialist enterprise of capitalist or fascist countries. Or else it might forcibly impose a rhythm of work and production which enabled it fairly soon to gain the level of more developed nations. This second solution was chosen by Stalin — at the cost of sacrifices we can more easily guess than fully know. It looks as if the Russian victory was won at the cost of abandoning the political liberty and the liberty of

conscience, which are characteristic of the western kinds of democracy. But there is more in it than that. If we are to believe a man like Koestler it is a tyranny which is socialist only in name, which conquered Germany and the East and which is now the only power capable of standing up to the United States. Where is the freedom in a country where the Trades Unions are a mere assembly of puppets in the hands of the Party? Where is equality in a country whose new privileged class is that of government employees and technicians; the true feudal lords of the new régime? Russia has sacrificed the individual freedom and equality of its citizens in order to save its freedom as a State. International rivalry reduces to nothing more than a word the economic freedom which was gained by the victory of communism over capitalism, since it compels the sacrifice of political freedom and freedom of conscience. Economic freedom and equality are as illusory without freedom of conscience and political freedom as are these liberties without economic freedom and equality.

Let me sum up. I see a double danger facing our ideal of democracy. First of all there is the danger of the economic oppression of one class by another in the countries of the old world. Then there is the danger of international rivalry which condemns nations to sacrifice all they possess to protect their independence. In fact it is always the same danger. It is always the rich and the powerful who are threatening to crush the poor and the weak. It does not matter whether the rich are a military class, an economic class or a privileged nation, the result is always the same. The problem appears differently in different circumstances. But the oppressed are always the same. And God has compassion on them.

Democracy and Christianity

And what of our ideal of democracy? I say *our* ideal because I find myself these days linking democracy and Christianity. If it is true that God loves men, if it

is true that we must love them as He loves them, we must desire that all men should attain to the highest possible degree of humanity, and that means that men must become more fully responsible for their own destinies before God. Now today, in the present situation of the world, we may see that on the political plane it is democracy which most closely approaches to these requirements of Christian charity. It is of course true that one can think of other situations and, in consequence, of other régimes. But we must look at things as they are. We must aim, not at limiting in a craven spirit the responsibilities which are offered us, but at accepting them. And only a free régime admits of that. I mean a régime of freedom and equality, for these two words are inseparable. Democracy does not offer men greater guarantees of happiness but it makes them more fully responsible for their own destinies. And this is the real argument for democracy.

I know that there are theologians and Christians who believe that these two domains should be kept apart, that the private life belongs to God while it is best to leave the public life to the powers of this world. This is a conception that might be summed up thus: "Let us pray to God and submit to the powers that be". But this is a pessimistic theory which you find in a Luther or a Pascal, but which charity will not allow me to accept. All forms of oppression cannot but fill us with horror, and by every means at our disposal we must struggle towards the end that men should attain to that high dignity to which God calls them.

It is a fact that, if the life of man has for long been limited to his relationship with his neighbours, today it covers a far wider field. We may say that the destiny of man has widened in scope. Politics have entered the field of our consciousness and our responsibility. Perhaps this will not always be so, perhaps politics will once more become as independent of our will as the rainfall or the movements of the heavenly bodies. But at this stage when men have become responsible for public life —

and this is a great and serious fact — democracy now appears as the path which we must follow, the only path on which our humanity can and dare advance if it would fulfil itself according to the grace of God.

Democracy is no more in our eyes than the opportunity offered us in these days for more and more men to attain to a more complete humanity. Need I add that when I speak of man I am thinking of Christ? If there are any Christians who can reconcile themselves to reactionary ideas by which the destiny of man is limited and brought back to mere private concerns, let us ask them how they can remain as blind as bats in the clear light of Péguy. The power of God is there to roll back the stone from all the tombs where men are trying to bury the body of suffering humanity.

For five years unspeakable suffering has fallen upon a world which was the prey of the fascist demon. Democracy barely survived the assault. The myth of a superior race or nation dragged countless people to death. What was really threatened was Christian universalism, while democracy simply attempts to express this idea on the plane of public life. We find the religious basis of this universalism in the verse of the Gospel: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life". The world and whosoever is in the world — these are the objects of God's love. If it is true, as I believe it to be, that we cannot today separate public life from Christian life, or democracy from universalism of the Gospel, we must be deeply concerned with saving democracy from the dangers that threaten it. For no one can really believe that fascism is the only demon which can attack human societies. Democracy must overcome itself. You were wrong, dear editor, in writing that that was not a very good title!

"Democracy has its own inherent weaknesses and must find a way of conquering them", you also wrote. I would rather say that it has its inherent difficulties.

Democracy is difficult like all fine and noble things. It is difficult like loyalty, honour, purity. Montesquieu wrote that it was not possible without virtue. Indeed we must go further and say that it cannot be found where men have lost the grace of knowing all the evil of which they are capable and all the good to which they are destined. An ill-considered optimism can only lead to utopias without strength. Pessimism by itself leads to political cynicism like that of Machiavelli and his kind. But the Church, which possesses the secret of grace, has its own word to say in the discussion.

The Christian responsibility for democracy

Today democracy is threatened on one hand by the economic imperialism of privileged classes, and on the other by the economic imperialism of privileged nations. These are the two great problems which democracy must solve if it is to survive. The choice that faces us is between this inner triumph of democracies over themselves or new forms of totalitarianism. It is for the Christians to feel responsible for the future of the democracies.

It is therefore right that, wherever it becomes necessary, Christians should strive against the absolutism of economic privileges on the part of the possessing classes. I am sure that many evils could be avoided if we heard more frequently in the Church the cry of Jesus: "Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have your consolation". The number of texts in the Gospels about riches is remarkable. We always read them with a slight smile of acquiescence and complicity, without realising that they are too explicit for us merely to turn aside from them. These texts ought to trouble us. The Church must remind the rich that their salvation is very uncertain. It must teach them without delay: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations (Luke 16: 9)".

The Christian must also, where necessary, strive against the absolutism of privileged nations. This implies that each one of us must stand back from the international or colonial policy of our own governments. The Christians of the first centuries knew perfectly well that their kingdom was not of this world and that it was proper for them to maintain a certain reserve about the imperial government, even when it was largely in the hands of a Christian ruler. I notice also that we are much more sensitive to injustices that may be committed on our own soil than to those for which we are collectively responsible, as Frenchmen or Englishmen, with regard to other nations. We must enlarge our hearts, we must feel responsible for the results in other countries of the policy of our own government. Friends, those of you in particular to whom my country owes so large a part of its liberation, may I remind you that we, who have been under the fascist yoke, cannot forget the people of Spain. We yielded to fascist blackmail and allowed the African troops of Franco and Mussolini's battalions to strangle a generous people. How can you, who shed your blood for the liberation of Europe, seem to be so indifferent to what is happening on the other side of the Pyrenees? Can we ignore the persecution to which the Catholic clergy are subjecting Protestants? Are you afraid of the establishment of communism in Spain? Are you not making it inevitable in lands where free men cease to expect your aid?

There can be no democracy without the development of an international conscience. If we are not actively responsible, each in our own place, if we do not feel ourselves to be morally responsible for the whole world, we shall see fresh incarnations of Hitler. Christian faith must be lived out vigorously to create men who will prevent the shipwreck of democracy. And I should like to say here the Protestants must not go to sleep. Democracy in France would have more stability if Protestantism had more vigour. We must,

to be sure, acknowledge all that is admirable in contemporary Catholicism, but do not let us shut our eyes to the fact that our country has greatly suffered from all the ways in which Roman Catholicism has failed it. To what extent do the Roman Catholic clergy present a falsified Christianity in which worship in spirit and in truth, by which radiant personalities are developed, is buried under the weight of religious superstition and disastrous clerical politics! The Gospel must be preached with purity and with strength that men may be able to maintain their own liberties. The Churches must not serve or preach themselves but must proclaim with complete disinterest the grace of Him by Whom all things are possible. I believe that French Protestants might readily reproach the Roman Catholic religion in this matter. But the essential thing remains, as a friend of mine used to say, to fight against Romanism in our own hearts, that is to say against the spirit of superstition and domination, so that the Gospel may give men light.

The Gospel is a power unto life! This power must be shown forth. The Christian Churches must abjure all weakness with regard to the powers of this world which so often seduce them, and must rediscover simple and generous accents in which to preach the power that raises from the dead. The Church must become responsible for the public life of societies no less than for the private life of individuals. In this way alone will democracy be possible, in this way it can overcome itself. Then only shall we see all the men of good will return to the source of living water, men who, after being deceived by us, alas, have since been deceived by many human ideologies. I think of those "crusaders without a cross" of whom Koestler speaks, of those men of the "European Left" who have done so much and can still do so much for justice and liberty. Are we to leave those whom Marxism has deceived, those knight-errants of democracy, to sink in the mire of existentialism? These men need the Gospel clearly

preached ! For they are good soldiers, whom it would be a joy to bring face to face with their God, Whom they do not know. Is the Church ready for this task ? Democracy must overcome itself ? Christians must overcome themselves.

Should we Put our Faith in Democracy ?

LEILA ANDERSON

Christians know that no social philosophy or political system is worthy of men's supreme devotion, but there is much which ought to be said for democracy today. It is true that many people feel democracy has little or nothing to offer any more, and some people have never believed it would work. The lack of prestige from which democracy suffers in many quarters exists at a time when just the opposite might be expected if we consider that some of the best established democracies were on the winning side in the recent world war. I am inclined to think this loss of prestige arises on the one hand out of the confusion and lack of direction on the part of the democracies and on the other hand out of the clever strategy of Russia in extending her system to formerly feudal peoples and making the most of possibilities for negative propaganda against the western democracies. Among thoughtful people there are more fundamental reasons for loss of confidence in democracy, the chief of which is a rejection of the view of man on which much democratic thought and practice has been based.

Democracy's view of the individual

Democracy is a social philosophy based on the belief in the dignity of the individual. It is concerned with all aspects of human relations. It has expressed itself politically through such forms as regular elections, the secret ballot, proportional representation, the rule of the majority, opposition political parties, freedom of speech, religion, press, and assembly. Someone said rather cynically recently, "The United States has the finest principles in the world until she practises them". As an American writing about democracy I am aware of the limitations of my country in practising these principles but at the same time I know the freedom and opportunity which have come to millions of men largely, I believe, because of the advantages of the democratic system and not simply because of the natural resources of a very large and not heavily populated country. Under some other system of government the masses of the people might never have enjoyed this freedom and prosperity. With all its limitations, I believe in democracy because I have seen its fruits, and I believe it has much to offer for the future.

We must of course reject the easy optimism which is sometimes associated with the democratic view of both human nature and the social order. Like the Christian view, democracy recognises the high potentialities of man and sees him as a sinner. All men must participate in government not because they are so good but because no man should be allowed very great power. Thomas Jefferson said, "Sometimes it is said that man cannot be trusted with the government of himself. Can he, then, be trusted with the government of others?" And again, "The way to have good and safe government, is not to trust it all to one, but to divide it among the many". Democracy then is not based on a one-sided view of man, that is, on a wholly optimistic view. Utopian ideas need not accompany it. Nor need pessimistic views.

The life of God can and does affect the life of men in this world. And this can be said without making pretensions for the extent to which justice can be achieved in society. There is everything in democracy to encourage men to work for a just order, and it is not necessary at the same time to expect any absolute achievement.

Its relation to justice and freedom

One of the great questions which the advocates of democracy must face is whether through this system men may find social and economic justice. In some of the democratic countries considerable such justice has been secured, but the great fear in America of course is of unemployment and all that that means. We who have seen even a little of what unemployment does to individuals and to human relationships believe that here lies democracy's major challenge. Fortunately other countries recognise the necessity of economic planning and know that democracy and monopolistic capitalism are not synonymous. More and more people in America recognise the fallacies in laissez-faire economics and know too that the tremendous emphasis on the accumulation of money in our culture is by no means a universal characteristic of human culture. We hold the profound hope that through peaceful and legal methods we may learn to control our economic life.

Democracy offers men freedom. It is true that many are lost in the kind of world we have today with its impersonal industrial systems, its irresponsible newspapers, its confusion of ideas and purposes. We ask if democratic freedom is too much for men to bear. The reply is — Men want freedom. When once they have known it, it is very precious to them, but they of course do not want to be hungry and they do not want to be alone. The answer to the totalitarians is more real democracy, the kind which gives men jobs and food as well as freedom, and some of the democracies of the world are doing that. And democracy offers a fellowship

which is universal and a sense of purpose and a belief in the possibilities of man and help through group associations in decisions which seem too difficult to make alone. (Though of course some of the hardest decisions must be made alone.) Within the democracies men find groups in which they can function best as human beings and as citizens. Dr. William Temple says, "men's actual liberty is the freedom they enjoy in these various social units, these intermediate groupings". Through these, individuals find freedom over against the state and have the experience of a training ground for democracy. These groups help give the answer to the problem for the Christian of both individualism and collectivism.

Dr. Temple says further, "Freedom is the goal of politics. To establish and secure true freedom is the primary object of all right political action. For it is in and through his freedom that a man makes fully real his personality — the quality of one made in the image of God... no Christian supposes that any one can reach perfect freedom except through perfect faith — that is, a complete personal response to the love of God". Democracy more than any other system known to us offers the possibility for this freedom.

Democracy can deal with groups or parties which would destroy it in as effective a manner as any other system of government and perhaps better. Its method is to permit groups to organise and express themselves in opposition to the governing party. It believes this legal and peaceful and open opposition and effort to win adherents is far safer than repression with the possibility of explosion, and it believes valuable criticisms and constructive changes can be made in this way. Democracy does not grant the right to people to incite to violence or to act treasonably. However, it is no easy matter for a democracy to deal with anti-democratic groups or parties which seek to use the protection of democratic liberties to further their own ends. We know when men are desperate for want of jobs and

social security they are attracted to revolutionary movements of the right or left which make great promises to them. Such groups present tremendous problems in our world today, and established democracies cannot deal with them effectively on the political level alone but must also use educational, judicial, social and economic methods to safeguard democracy.

Its roots in the Christian tradition

There is no better setting for institutions of a religion which is concerned with the whole life of man than the democracies. There are obviously other kinds of societies where the church has far stronger backing from the state, but these societies offer little to men in their every day life. And some of these authoritarian regimes are in no sense friendly to Christianity. Within democracies men can function freely in relation to religious institutions and do not have to identify the interests of the church with the political interests of the state. Indifference may accompany this freedom, but that is preferable to coercion and the evils which accompany it.

To make a democracy work as it should, we need an educational system with social objectives, and we need an economic order which gives security to match political freedom. And most of all we need men with democratic convictions rooted in the Christian tradition. Democracy can grow only if the Church does its work of developing men of Christian character, men who to a great extent have found a center for their lives outside themselves and their own personal advancement. Democracy requires that there be Christians who not only individually but in groups make an impact on society by the very nature and concerns of the Church. And the Church is needed to criticise society in the name of Christianity. The Church itself must also be subject to criticism as must Christian leaders. We believe in the priesthood of all believers, and it is these believers who must have their word about the Church and about the

society outside the Church. Some will say we cannot look for guidance for democracy from Christians when there are so many race and class churches, but the Church more than any other institution in society has at its basis the ideal and practice of democracy in its approach to all men. And the Church is the only institution with the sole purpose of helping men live as sons of God.

We say again that we do not place all our faith in democracy, but we know of no better pattern of relationships for men to use as they try to live together in this world.

Is there a Common Meeting Ground ?

An open letter to the Editor.

from

DUSAN FRANCU

Prague, 13th April, 1947.

Dear Robert,

When I promised you to write an article for the issue of *The Student World* which was to be devoted to the problem of democracy, I was not fully aware of the difficulty of my task. I began to realise my inadequacy for tackling the problem, after I had begun to think about it, and noted that I had been asked to write about a question of wider range than the national scale. The problem of bringing together the Eastern and the Western conceptions of democracy was the very root of the failure of many international negotiations carried out by people better informed and better prepared for their task than I could possibly be. Therefore I prefer to give you my opinion on the problem and some personal remarks which perhaps, owing to the situation, history and present condition of

my country, may be of some value in the discussion of the problem. I shall try to face the problem from my personal point of view as a Christian, and an imperfect one too, who must feel that he is responsible for what is being done and has been done in the world.

A paradoxical question

First of all, I feel that there is something paradoxical in the formulation of the question itself. Socialism and communism have always been considered as influences of western mentality and western philosophy, something like "intruders" into the traditional Russian way of thinking. It is slightly curious to take as representatives today of the Eastern mentality thoughts that were in their time refused as the mere offspring of Western thought. I cannot help seeing one line of development in the process of the democratisation of government in Europe as it began in the modern era with the revolt against the Stuarts in England, with the struggle for the independence of the North American colonies, with the French Revolutions, with the Election Reform in England, and the World Revolution, as T. G. Masaryk, our first President, summarised the events of the first Great War. The purpose of all these political and social events was to extend to broader masses of the people concerned the right to decide the destinies of the country. Therefore I see that the line going from Locke, Rousseau, Adam Smith and Abraham Lincoln is the direct line to Marx, Lenin and Stalin. I see that the same principles which animated Abraham Lincoln's proclamation animated Joseph Stalin's speech backing the proposal of the new constitution of the U.S.S.R. in 1936.

In addition to the rights assured by other constitutions, Soviet legislators claim to have made progress in the direction of further democratisation, not only by giving the people the right to interfere with the Government and to prevent privileged minorities from dominating majorities of their fellow-citizens, but by backing

these reforms in abolishing the material advantages of a certain number of people who, by being rich, had greater influence than their fellow-citizens. I am sure that no Christian is likely to condemn the communist conception of democracy on this principle.

It is an old idea that democracy cannot be of any help except among people who are worthy of it, — worthy of it morally and intellectually. People cannot decide unless they understand what they are called to decide. This is another point where a relationship is possible. Both East and West stress the importance of education. I think that the efforts made by the Soviet government to raise the intellectual level of the Soviet people are universally recognised as unique.

Differences of moral principle

If we consider the moral side of the problem, we realise that this is where most objections from the Christian point of view are pronounced. In fact, there are many Christians who do not find their faith and their moral principles incompatible with the economic and social changes claimed by the communists, but who very often disagree with the moral principles of the communists, with their idea of fair play in politics and in public life in general. I have not enough experience to know how the situation stands in other countries and therefore my opinion will be based chiefly on the experiences from my own country.

I remember that, some ten years ago, when I was finishing my secondary education in a small town in South Bohemia, my friends and I were very sincere sympathisers with the communist group which was active in our town. It had the strength of an oppressed minority; it had nothing to lose and therefore it was never afraid to say very frankly in public what was wrong in the administration of the town, in the government formed at that time by a coalition of parties, whose newspapers did not achieve much besides compromise. Members,

and especially the leading members, of the Communist Party were very enthusiastic and brave people, who for their courage often had to suffer various disabilities and were sometimes sentenced to prison. Our sympathies were fully on the side of these people. We were ready to help the poor workmen, miners and farmers, because we were sure that we would be helping social justice and we had no doubt that we would be acting in accordance with our Christian principles. This is why we admired the Soviet Union, where we looked for all wrongs done to the poor to be repaired, where we knew there was no racial hatred and discrimination, no exaggerated and blind nationalism. We saw it confirmed in the new Soviet constitution from 1936 onwards.

After the Second Great War many of us were disappointed to see that people whom we had often wished to rule behaved, when in power, not very differently from the same way as the old rulers, and committed the same errors as they did. I had many discussions with my friends, and at last I came to the conclusion that only active Christian realism is able to give us a good solution, which would prevent us from assuming a wholly negative and hostile attitude towards the present Communist Parties and which at the same time would save us from being lost in the mass of their admirers who are deaf to any criticism.

We must first take into account that the Communist Parties in all countries occupied by Germans were terribly persecuted during the war and that many of their best people perished in concentration camps, or were executed. Therefore, when the Party came into power after the end of the war, the leaders saw that they had almost no old adherents, who had proved their faithfulness when the Party was weak. They found themselves facing great masses of people who were ready to become communists but from whom the convinced communists were to be selected, because many people came in the hope of earning privileges and advantageous positions when they became members of the Party responsible for

the government. Therefore the Communist Party suffers (as is very natural with all groups that are called to assume large responsibility) from lack of capable people, to whom they must give an opportunity of showing what they are able to do. This disadvantage is increased in some of the Eastern countries by another drawback. Most of these countries have no democratic tradition. A people that has for years been governed by its kings or princes cannot be expected to become democratic in a year or two. It is a most tragic picture to see people who have a genuine desire to be called democratic but who have no training, who have not the democratic mentality which consists in a certain toleration of the opinion of others.

Another advantage of the old democratic countries is in the developed methods of political struggle. We must not be surprised to see that the Communist Party applies methods that proved to be successful in the time when the Party, as a small minority, had to face strong majorities, which had every means at their disposal and very often did not hesitate to use the most efficient means regardless of moral principles. How often were the workers cheated, their representatives tempted with bribes or sent to prison on false pretext, or their reputation ruined! If the non-communist parties complain now of being treated in an undemocratic way, is it not because their communist adversaries have proved to be disciples worthy of their masters? And we as Christians are obliged to ask ourselves whether, through our Churches, we have done everything that could have been done to help the minorities of the pre-war Communist Parties, and to oppose the methods of violence often used against them?

Attitudes to personal freedom

The next charge that we very often hear is that there is no freedom of thought under the communist régime, that there is no respect of personality and no respect for a different opinion. This is due partly to the fact that

the Communist Party still could not get rid of its mentality of an oppressed minority, although it is now in many countries the strongest party in power. As far as toleration is concerned we must remember that the states with a socialist, or semi-socialist, régime are very often similar to besieged towns, where, instead of civil law, a court-martial is valid to defend the régime. Is this due to the socialist régime? I think not. Let us only remember how long the time lasted before the Letters on Toleration were written in England, and what severe measures were used by all other youthful régimes in history.

Very often I ask myself, whether we are not mistaken in considering freedom as a natural quality of the same rank as natural forces such as gravity. I think that we should rather consider it as a gift of God, such as good health, which we must first try to deserve and strive for, before it is given to us. I do not mean to give up personal freedom and to submit to the tyranny of the state. I only want to stress that we are very often ready to claim our rights, and we do not ask what are our duties. I often realise that I would be glad to see social justice established, but that I am reluctant to face the troubles that go along with the struggle for it. And it is no easy struggle, because I know that too many people would be only too glad to see old times coming back with the social privileges and material advantages for them. The worst is that they very often try to disguise themselves as those who join the crusade of Christianity against atheism. I confess that I often do not agree with the measures taken by our authorities, and then I try to analyse the situation of the country and find out what other steps should be taken which would be equally efficient and meet my objections at the same time. In the end I often conclude that after all the situation could have been solved only by the step actually taken.

This means that, having in view the aim of helping the socialisation of the country to go on without interruption, I often admit that it is inevitable to make concessions which otherwise would be incompatible with our

Christian principles. But I should like to stress that to make these concessions must be considered as the necessary solution, which is acceptable only in the really most urgent cases. We must not go so far as to say that the process of socialisation is subject to different moral principles from other events in our life. We must not allow such a statement, because it is in opposing it that we shall do our best service to the present effort for social justice. We must stand firmly on our Christian principles and especially we must be strong in love for our neighbours and understanding for their problems.

The task of Christians

With love for our neighbours — this is what I want to stress. Only Christians, if they so wish, can have the right attitude to the mistakes and difficulties of Socialist efforts. Only Christians, since they are aware of the reality of sin in every man, can help to strengthen efforts made towards social and economic justice by emphasising the moral side and, in the broader sense of the word, the religious side of the process, which is often for the time being neglected because more concrete and more urgent problems seem to be in the foreground of our interest. I agree with Mr. Leonard Raggaz that the unhappy divorce between Christianity and socialism which took place some hundred years ago, chiefly owing to the indolence and sin of Christian Churches, must not last any longer.

This is my contribution to the problem of the reconciliation of the two conceptions of democracy. I think that both conceptions are due to the same effort to secure social justice on earth. The Eastern democracies strive towards the forms of civil life and civil rights that up to the present have been actually achieved in their best form in the West, but, alas, not for all. Western democracy must think of evening up the amount of democratic rights, and the chances of exertion of these rights by all citizens. Only Christian understanding and readiness to

sacrifice the privileges and advantages of the old régime that we all wish to establish can bring the two conceptions of democracy together.

I realise how difficult it is to be admitted as co-partner and cooperator by the people who work in the socialist parties. They are still full of suspicions, they are still under the influence of unfavourable experiences at the hands of those people who, either by misunderstanding or owing to unfavourable circumstances or, last but not least, owing to their egoism, made the name of Christian seem incompatible with social progress. I also know that people who dare to try an alliance of the kind proposed must be prepared for disillusion and disappointments. We are still too ready to have sentimental pictures of immoral oppressors and innocent oppressed, such as exist only in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which moved me deeply when I was a child but cannot and must not disfigure my seeing things as they are, and being prepared to face them.

I see that I have not followed a logical pattern in answering your question. I preferred to underline the moral problems for Christian people, which I feel lie beneath the formulation of the question. I feel on re-reading my letter that I may be suspected of smuggling in an apology of socialism, and that greater impartiality was expected from me. I confess that I feel it a very difficult task to be impartial in such vital problems of our life, and, writing in English, I realise that the majority of the readers of *The Student World* will be from what we call the Western part of the world — until it ceases to be divided into East and West.

Yours,

Dusan.

The Biblical Perspective

ALEXANDER MILLER

The theme of the Bible is the way in which Christ the King governs His Kingdom. The Bible is, in one of its aspects, the constitutional handbook of the Kingdom of God. As students we used to debate at length whether the Kingdom would come by man's building or by God's — and I think the debate goes on. We would resolve that debate sooner — or rather abandon it quicker — if we accepted the first affirmation the Bible makes about it: "His dominion is an everlasting dominion and his kingdom is from generation to generation"¹. Every other facet of Kingdom teaching — the Kingdom as a gift, as a hid treasure, the Kingdom as "among us", "coming with power", as growing like leaven or like a mustard-seed — all of these depend on the fundamental affirmation of Jewish faith, that "the most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men"², that He always has ruled, does rule and always will rule, though Satan may rage and men rebel. There is no need for men to build a Kingdom for Him; His authority has always been without check or limit. Men's choice is not whether they will inhabit the Kingdom or not, or whether they will or will not cooperate in its building. The choice is whether, since God is in fact King, they will accept His rule and find blessedness, or rebelliously reject it and so find damnation. God rules in Creation, by the Law, by His choice of Israel, by His sending of the prophets — and in the fulness of time His

¹ Psalm 45 : 6 ; Daniel 4 : 34 ; etc.

² Daniel 4 : 32.

Son, "whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds" ¹. The *kerygma* of the Apostles is the re-affirmation of Old Testament religion, with a new explicitness and a new post-Resurrection note. It is Christ who rules and has ruled from the beginning; the hidden King is now manifest. That is why it is legitimate to say that the theme of the whole Bible from the first chapter of Genesis is the way in which Christ the King governs His kingdom — for the God who "made all things out of nothing, by the word of His power, and all very good" ², is the very God who in Christ "for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was made man". So the created world has its beginning, its meaning and its end in Christ, and every stage between the beginning and the end is in the plan of His government. "(God) hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" ³.

Kingship in the Old Testament

The Jewish notion of government derived from their understanding of the Rule of God. The Jews — alone apparently among the ancient peoples — never yielded unqualified authority to kings. The very institution of kingship was always suspect, because to establish kings seemed to be to yield to men prerogatives which belong to God. In a church discussion the other day I heard a sincere man argue against the modern trend towards republicanism, saying that he could not see why, when we talk of "the kingdom of God", we should be so eager to build our earthly systems on republican or democratic lines. The Jews reasoned in a precisely opposite way. Since God alone is king, every earthly king is in some sense

¹ Hebrews 1 : 2.

² Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 9.

³ Acts 17 : 31.

a usurper. The materials for the study of their history from this point of view are not very plentiful, but the following facts seem to be plain :

- a) *Kingship is at best a necessity due to sin, and at worst a revolt against God.* Every actual instance of kingship is likely to reflect both these aspects ¹.
- b) *Kingship is based on a covenant and limited by a constitution.* In Deuteronomy 17 : 18-20, it is enjoined that the king must govern by the "code", that "his heart be not lifted up above his brethren". Which brings us to
- c) "(The sovereign)... has a special position with peculiar privileges, but he is only *primus inter pares*, and his privileges are limited in themselves and balanced by responsibilities" ².

In this connection the prophets were the conscience of the king, and while their voice was far from being an echo of *vox populi*, it was the rights of the people they cared for, next to the prerogatives of God Himself. Notice Jeremiah 22 : 13ff, where Jehoiakim is rebuked because in his dealings with his people he does his *neighbour* wrong. T. H. Robinson's summary of the matter is that "Israel exhibited a passionate insistence on the value of human personality, a refusal to recognise that any social order or political institution could be valid and permanent if it conflicted with the rights of man" ³.

In Israel's history, then, a strong insistence on the sovereignty of the most high God is wedded to a strong instinct of equality among common men. God might concede power to kings if the people could not conduct their affairs without them, but "he removeth kings and

¹ I Samuel 8 : 6-18 ; 10 : 19. This paradoxical character of all government is developed in Reinhold Niebuhr's *Does the State and Nation Belong to God or the Devil ?*

² T. H. ROBINSON, *A History of Israel*, p. 229.

³ Op. cit. p. 450.

setteth up kings"¹, and whether kings are set up or removed depends on whether or not they hold their power and use it for God's glory and the people's good.

It is, finally, most important to notice how often the will of the people is effective as the instrument of God both in the election and rejection of kings. 1 Samuel 11: 15: "And all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the Lord", is typical of the way in which Gideon and Abimelech, David and Solomon were understood to hold their power².

To sum up our reading of the Old Testament evidence: Kingship is an ordinance of God under the Law, and the good king is he who acknowledges that he holds his authority under God by election of the people — and behaves as if he meant this acknowledgment to be no formal thing.

Under God, also, the people are the final repository of political power. They may choose to copy their neighbours and save themselves from anarchy by electing kings to rule over them, but the Old Testament shows a very qualified enthusiasm for this arrangement, and is at pains to point out its dangers unless constitutional, prophetic and "democratic" restraints are provided.

The New Testament on the State

The Apostolic writings give us nothing remotely like a developed doctrine of the State. The writers do no more than give us the first Christian comments on the state in the light of the *kerygma*. The starting-point for all their doctrine was the *kerygma*, which as we have seen crowned the Old Testament by re-affirming the reality of the rule of God, declaring that the Kingdom had

¹ Daniel 2: 21.

² SAMUEL RUTHERFORD's monumental *Lex Rex*, published in 1644, has an exhaustive examination of the biblical evidence, with which Rutherford intended to confound those who contended for any unrestricted "divine right of kings".

"come" in the events culminating in Pentecost and identifying "this Jesus whom ye have crucified" as the rightful King of the everlasting Kingdom. Their thinking about the State started from the *kerygma* — but it was not carried very far. There was no time within the period covered by the New Testament canon to develop a critical doctrine, and the whole of Christian thinking about the State has been falsely limited by misguided attempts to make the valid but limited Pauline insights direct the Church through twenty centuries¹.

The Old Testament teaching was paradoxical, as we have seen. On the one hand Samuel anoints Saul king with Yahweh's approval; on the other hand the whole institution of kingship is an affront to God. Paul in his reaction to antinomianism and a false otherworldliness retained only one side of the paradox. The State is an ordinance of God, certainly, and as such should be a terror "to the evil work"; but it was not long before the Church discovered that rulers have a way of being, contrary to Paul's account of them, a terror to good works and the veritable authors and sponsors of evil. Church doctrine as we shall see has filled out the limited and partial Pauline insights. The perennial problem of government is precisely how to lodge authority in the hands of those most likely to be "not a terror to good works, but to the evil", and to provide constitutional safeguards to ensure that they attend to their proper business².

¹ R. NIEBUHR, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. 2, p. 280. In a note on Romans 13: 1-3, Niebuhr points out that while the Pauline justification of government was valid enough in its historical context, "The fact that it became a vehicle for an uncritical devotion to government... illustrates one of the perils of Biblicism. Biblical observations upon life are made in a living relation to living history. When they are falsely given an eminence which obscures this relation, they can become the source of error and confusion." This whole section of Niebuhr's Gifford Lectures is very important for the present subject.

² SAMUEL RUTHERFORD in *Lex Rex*, p. 173, has an important comment on Romans 13: 1-3, in which he puts emphasis on the phrase "there is no power but of God". Rutherford maintains that kings therefore hold power in the same way as do "the Roman senate, a master, a father", for these all hold their power from God. This implicitly means — and Rutherford develops

The development of the biblical doctrine

In spite of the limiting influence of what Niebuhr calls Paul's "undialectical" appreciation of government, Christian history has been informed in very large measure by the authentic biblical and paradoxical view, i. e. that government is at once a divine ordinance and a constant danger.

As early as Augustine the problem is discussed of how we are to apply wholesome and necessary restraints to the pretensions of rulers. Mediaeval Christianity provided ample disciplinary checks on the power of kings, but was uncritical about the visible and Papal Church as the custodian of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Reformation was strongly infected by the Pauline limitations, but Calvin shook himself free enough to declare that the unjust prince could be removed by the people — he need be held "of no more account than a pair of worn-out shoes". John Milton as the spokesman for the English Revolution was explicit about the rights of the people: "Since the king or magistrate holds his authority of the people, both originally and naturally for their good in the first place, and not his own, then may the people as oft as they shall judge it for the best, either choose him or reject him, retain him or depose him though no Tyrant, merely by the liberty and right of freeborn men, to be governed as seems to them best. This, though it cannot but stand with plain reason, shall be made good also by Scripture. Deuteronomy 17: 14"¹. The Founding Fathers built into the American Constitution explicit checks on governmental power, which, as we shall see, were grounded in a biblical understanding of the necessary subjugation of rulers — because of the temptations of power — to the will of God and of the people.

the implications elsewhere — that from God also derives the power of the people to remove tyrants, so that the power of a revolutionary movement ought to be as seriously regarded by Christians as the power of an established state.

¹ The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates.

A broader biblical view

The kind of empirical approach we have used so far has its limitations, because kingship with its prerogatives, dangers and necessary limitations is not our characteristic modern problem, and the setting of biblical doctrine and practice is a world removed from ours.

I want therefore to consider biblical doctrine in the broadest way, avoiding any "proof-text" approach. What is it that the Bible actually affirms about man which should be reflected in our approach to the modern problems of political power? Two things, I think: first man's very great dignity and worth; and second, his great sinfulness and utter unreliability.

Man has his dignity in his creation — he is made in the image of God, he has dominion over the earth, he is "made but little lower than God"¹ — and in the Fall he demonstrates his utter unreliability. Under the new Covenant in Christ man confesses his personal and social helplessness, and is given back his dignity at the price of giving up his rebellion.

It is clear that the political doctrine and practice of Israel reflects both these insights (or both these elements of Revelation). Kings are necessary because men are sinful: kings must be restrained because kings too are sinful and men are valuable. If Israel had been able to ignore the sinfulness of men they would have preserved the primitive anarchy²: if they had been careless of the common man's worth they would have set no constitutional restraints upon kings, nor would the prophetic protest have taken the form it did.

"A thing of price is man, since for him Christ died": that is, man's infinite worth does not depend on any high estimate of his quality, but solely on the store which God sets by him.

¹ Psalm 8:5 (English Revised Version).

² Judges 17:6. "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes".

Modern attitudes tested by the Bible

a) *Idealism* — the view that since men are inherently good and respond to the good, social organisation should avoid restraints and always “appeal to the best in men”. On this view of course the State is at a discount and the only tolerable “order” is anarchy. The worth of man is affirmed (cf. Rousseau) but his worth is confused with his moral quality. One side of the Bible doctrine is accepted ; the other is ignored. There is no profundity in this view ; and it can be held in practice only by distorting history to obscure the real debt humanity owes to political organisation and state sanctions.

b) *Cynicism* — the view that men have no capacity for disinterestedness or for justice, that there is therefore no adequate ground on which to base rule by the people, and that therefore autocracy of some sort offers the only possibility of order. “Man is under the sway of original sin in his totality... The Christian knows that it is strictly impossible for him to live except in sin... therefore he steers clear of the pettiness of moral hair-splitting... An ethicised Christianity is a counter-Christianity through and through... God has made this world perishable, it is doomed to destruction. May it, then, go to the dogs according to destiny ! Men who imagine themselves capable of making it better, who want to create a ‘higher’ morality, are starting a ridiculous petty revolt against God...”¹

This absolute cynicism has no biblical basis. The Bible does not in fact say that men have no capacity for disinterestedness or justice. It does not say that men have no righteousness, but that we are not saved by our righteousness. The very saying “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags”² implies some moral achievement. In this connection Niebuhr justly quotes against Barth³

¹ *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol 2, p. 263.

² Stapel : quoted by KARL POPPER, *The Open Society*, Vol. 2, p. 72.

³ Isaiah 64 : 6.

the saying of St. Paul in Romans 2 : 14 : "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves ; which show the work of the law written in their hearts..."

c) *Utopianism* — the view that justice has every chance, that history is working towards a cooperative society, in which the peace which is "the tranquillity of order" will supplant all historical antagonisms and tensions. This kind of utopianism and Marxism are mutually indebted and support each other. But the Bible has no historical doctrine of this sort, when we take the Gospels and the apostolic teaching as the crown and explication of the prophetic world-view. Jesus clearly believed that the Law would go along with the Gospel till the end of the world ¹, and that this side of the judgment men would (or might) not outgrow their fallenness or the restraints and penalties which their corporate disobedience make necessary.

d) *Pessimism* — the view that justice has no chance, that man's wilfulness makes impossible even proximate endeavours after justice, and that, as Philippe Maury put it ², we must be "... content with the continuance of a society which is relatively livable, one, that is to say, in which the Christian has still a place".

This doctrine ignores what Niebuhr calls the "indeterminate possibilities" of historical and political achievement ³ : and it means in recent practice that the Church does not challenge the tyrannical state until it explicitly interferes with liberty of preaching. If our analysis of the biblical material is sound, the State should be challenged by the Church every time it transgresses the Law, i. e. when it fails to care for social and economic and racial and political justice.

¹ Matthew 5 : 18.

² *The Student World*, Fourth Quarter 1946, p. 379.

³ What does it mean in the political sphere that Jesus said : "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9 : 29) ?

This view also makes too light of man's real capacity for disinterestedness, and of the strength of man's instincts of compassion and for justice. These "instincts" are immensely potent in history though they do not transform it into the perfected Kingdom of God. There is no biblical authority for denying their power, and no Christian interest to be served in trying to.

One further and final point needs to be made here, though I expect that other articles in this issue will deal with it more directly. Political democracy in the West has developed contemporaneously with the growth of the optimistic and idealistic philosophy of Renaissance naturalism. Modern theology in revolt against all kinds of liberalism tends to be quite indiscriminating in its rejection of Renaissance philosophy and everything correlated with it. It therefore shows signs of wanting to throw out the democratic baby with the Renaissance bath-water. The argument runs roughly thus: that since democracy is idealistic in its estimate of man, assumes that he knows what is good for him and has the capacity to achieve it, identifies the voice of the people with the voice of God and so on; therefore a more realistic (which is to say, pessimistic) view of man will be bound to call democracy in question. There is no space to argue this intricate question here. But it is worth pointing out that in fact our democratic political systems in Britain and America are closely dependent not only upon Renaissance individualism but also upon Puritan and biblical realism. Democratic political systems have been built in the West (others must make the comparison with Europe and the Orient) not because those who built them trusted the people, but because they did not trust the rulers. The American Constitution, for example, as James Bryce pointed out, was "the work of men who believed in original sin and were resolved to leave open for transgressors no door which they could possibly shut"¹.

¹ This historical application of Biblical realism is described in NIEBUHR's *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*, and in an article by WILL HERBERG in *Christianity and Society*, Fall Number, 1946.

* * *

When the editor asked me for this article he said: "You will recognise that it is a silly business to go round in the Bible looking for arguments for present democratic action". So of course it is, Robert, if by that you mean that we should not go to the Bible looking for arguments to justify our modern democratic assumptions. But it is equally silly to approach the Bible with the assumption that it will have nothing explicit to say to us. We used to look too much for guiding formulae; and we have been so straightly warned off that that we tend to react by refusing to see guiding formulae when in fact they are there. What the Bible has to say to us — whether much or little, about democracy or about anything else — we can discover only by looking inside it. The finding of this article is that it has an astonishing lot to say to us about democracy. In summary it says this: That we must build our political systems in responsibility to God, in deep love for man and equally deep distrust of man. That government is necessary as "a dyke against sin", and democratic government as a dyke against the sin of rulers.

If we submit ourselves to the Bible it becomes our business to build democratic values and democratic restraints into our political systems, a task so far very imperfectly done; and to build the same values and the same restraints into our economic systems, a task which has hardly been done at all.

Christian Community: Fact and Judgment

C. W. LI

When the editor of *The Student World* assigned me the above subject, I first recalled an incident which took place in a student center of the Chinese S.C.M. As often happened, towards the end of a student strike, the opinion of the student community of that University, where the center was located, was divided. Some favored a continued strike; others wished to wind it up and thus to resume normal university life. Since the strike involved the death of a few students, that division of opinion had some implications that reflected the different shades of political opinions among the students.

That division, unfortunately, to some extent cut across a small Christian community inside the center. There was an informal Sunday service going on at that time. The worship committee as well as the small congregation itself naturally consisted of students on both sides. What was more unfortunate was that quite a number of them felt that they could no longer sit together either in a committee or in a service.

Christian community must be maintained

As a man who felt some initiating responsibility in that project, I intervened in the situation. The "loyalists" (as those who favored a continued strike were called) contended that the "oppositionists" (as the opposite side was called) had "betrayed the cause of democracy", and therefore could not be tolerated. While the latter charged the former was "trying to get fish out of stirred-up

water" (meaning to profit by the trouble) and therefore "acting in detriment to the general welfare, which should be the cornerstone of democracy".

Upon hearing the contention of both sides, several students and I took up our position. We did not weigh the reason of the one side as against the other. In a rather "undemocratic" way, we disregarded the argument of both sides. The reason was that both of them, we believed, had completely disregarded the supreme Christian cause. Instead, they put up "democracy" (as they understood it) as the supreme cause. For that cause they were almost willing to give up the right of worshipping God.

When I was in a rather alarmed state those days, a student came to me. He said, first of all, the Christian community was a democratic community, as evidenced by the community created by the Apostles and described in the Acts. Then, he reasoned : "You should reserve the right for people to act according to their wishes under any circumstances".

There we saw the danger for the Christian community at large. Several students strove to keep together our small community. Soon the University had to move back to the North of China. Our effort was therefore an unfinished story.

From that incident one might draw a few lessons : first, Christians should be aware that their loyalty to God should, under no circumstances, have substituted for it a loyalty to any idol, as symbolised by democracy in that case. Secondly, the present burning issues should not be allowed to split the Christian unity ; on the contrary our differences may be solved only in seeking God's will for such issues and in our complete obedience to His will. Thirdly, while the congregational life of many denominations claims to be ruled by democratic principles, it should never be understood that the principle as such should undermine the existence of the congregation itself.

The relation of Christianity to democracy

Those lessons remind me of another instance. In a preparatory class for baptism, a student, in China, said : "Since Christianity claims God as the absolute and everlasting Ruler of all men, our religion must be built upon an authoritarian basis. How then, he asked, could Christianity be described as an embodiment of democracy ?"

An attempt to answer that question would involve a great theoretical discussion. The writer is only interested in the practical bearing of that question upon Christian community. In a way it shows the adverse effect of some current propaganda going on in the Christian community and outside, which almost amounts to the equation : Christianity = Democracy (in some western political circles) = the Western World.

It tends to identify Christianity with democracy and vice-versa. In this way our religion is in danger of being affiliated with some temporal power, politics and the like, and easily swallowed up by the latter. From their Christian convictions, individual Christians or Christian groups may draw up a concrete program for the realisation of some democratic principle in a given situation, and work for it. But they should never be allowed to imply that the program as such was all that Christianity meant in that situation. Our religion goes much farther. In any given situation the ultimate Christian solution is the salvation of the individual, community or nation by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Some may ask : "Does Christian salvation have anything to do at all with democracy ?" Yes, salvation gives men a new status as the children of God. It restores the dignity of every man. It is God's command that every human being should be counted as *one* of His children and not a bit less. Before Him, every one has the same value. Here comes the basic and also the highest ideal of democracy. Every brand of democracy in the world today should be judged by this Christian standard. If

some community claims to be democratic, we should see whether the value of each person is respected or not. If not, let us protest against it.

Such a protest was filed by Chinese Protestant leaders last year. The protest was by no means a perfect document. But a few points expressed therein deserve to be mentioned here. Pointing to the present situation in China, the leaders said that human beings are the children of God and therefore should be treated only as ends but not as means. The people, they went on to say, should be granted fundamental rights such as freedom of speech, press, assembly, etc. That protest gives evidence that the Christian community is able to pass positive and prophetic judgment on democracy or the lack of it.

Democracy within the Christian community.

The democratic voice and action of the Christian community to the outside world must be substantiated by the democratic life within the community itself. Let us look into the facts, in this regard, about the Christian community. A critical appraisal would reveal that the situation is not very encouraging. In some Christian communities, the ecclesiastical authority rules over the whole community. In others the democratic practice is only nominal as the decisions to be taken by the congregation are very few throughout the year or are presented to them as accomplished acts. In the so-called younger churches some missionaries often have the habit of determining things all by themselves.

It must be made clear that the question of ecclesiastical authority is largely a matter of the tradition of different denominations. Furthermore, the democratic principle, e. g. the majority rule, cannot be applied to the every realm of Church life. Suppose members of a congregation were asked to tell in what way each of them conducts his daily prayers. It would be absurd to cast a vote and decide by a majority rule which is to be practised. This example may make no sense at all. Yet

it probably serves to illustrate the point that the ordinary democratic principle cannot overrun man's relationship with God. That is, in turn, perhaps one of the sources from which ecclesiastical authority derives its power.

However, it is time now to advocate strongly that the steering of a church, or Christian association, as an *organisation* should rest entirely in the hands of its members. The stewardship is not limited to the few, but it is entrusted to every Christian. Any form of minority control, whether it be the ecclesiastical authority in a church, or professional dominance in such association as S.C.M., Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., should give way to democratic control by popular consent.

The practice of democracy

Some Christian organisations would say that they are following the democratic practice. Actually it is not true. Consciously or unconsciously, the democratic practice has often been evaded.

For instance, I was told that a missionary in China made a nomination before a committee and asked: "Do you have any objection if we appoint this man for that post?" The question is undemocratically tactful. His subjective wish in favor of that man was so strong that he put the case in an extremely clever way. With his prestige among the lay leaders, naturally no objection was raised. Democratic practice can only be carried out if the leaders have an objective mind and permit the majority to make decisions. This does not, of course, prevent the leaders from presenting the case clearly to the members.

Another phenomenon in some Christian organisations concerns so-called "high policy". Admittedly the executive branch of an organisation should be entrusted with the execution of such high policy as decided by the proper legislative body. But in the course of time, the executive may interpret and carry out the high policy

in a wrong way. Checking up in most Christian organisations can only be done by the members. In other words, the executive branch should feel it necessary to consult the rank-and-file about high policy from time to time. It should never be kept as a "top secret". In the operations of S.C.M. centers in China, we have found that only through such an "all-open-to-all" policy could the suspicion of the public be eliminated and constructive suggestions solicited. Democratic practice demands the full right of enquiry and expression for the members of our community.

Someone may say that the rank-and-file does not have a desire for such a right. They seem to be indifferent to the affairs of the community. One reason for this is that they have not been given enough chance to practise their right. In one denomination in China, which is noted for its democratic institution, it was told that the congregation only had one occasion annually to practise it. It was when they were asked to elect the board of the church. Naturally the congregation just raised their hands for every name submitted to them. The ordinary members of the church have only the habit of following, not leading. This is the result of a strange practice in which democracy has been granted by people from above in a piecemeal manner. Thereby democracy becomes a mere formality. The proper democratic practice is to arouse the sense of responsibility among the members by throwing responsibility upon them. Democracy is above all a method to be learned by unrestricted practice.

The importance of procedure

Speaking of practice one cannot but think of another important factor, namely the democratic procedure. It may be correct to say that in Europe many people do not take the procedure seriously enough. As a result some very democratic-minded leader might have been misunderstood by others as being rather undemocratic. Broadly speaking democratic procedure does not confine

itself to a few rules. It means, in practice, to be considerate to others and thus give enough room for them to exercise their rights. For instance, someone might speak for twenty minutes or more in a one-hour discussion. Technically, it would thus be impossible for others to speak their opinion. Therefore the inconsiderateness of that person requires a time-limit to be introduced in the procedure. The procedure is definitely of secondary importance, but if it were handled too carelessly, then it might have serious consequences.

Up to this point it appears as if there were very little democracy in Christian communities. Such an impression would be too far from the truth. Without any exaggeration the Christian community has best preserved the genuine democratic spirit and tradition in its various institutions. Nowhere in the world is each individual counted as fully as in the Christian community. No groups in the Christian community have got any special axe to grind. There is no manœuvring of pressure groups or vested interests in the community. Generally speaking, a Christian does not need to be cautious in speaking his convictions for fear of reprisal or persecution. To be a Christian one is not bound to conform to some pattern of life except to observe what may be prescribed by voluntary Christian discipline. There is no privileged caste in contrast to the underprivileged in the Christian community. Though the Christian community is not meant to be a demonstration center of democracy, it is, to say the least, one of the very few such centers in existence.

Democracy is much abused everywhere in the world. It would be a great contribution if the Christian community all over the world would demonstrate democracy as a way of life, rather than a mere institution or system.

THE EDITOR'S TRAVEL DIARY

Travelling Eastwards

*The Austrian Tyrol seems to remind British people of moments of purest happiness, and so they are always sentimental when they refer to it! Perhaps also a recent reading of Phyllis Bottome's *The Lifeline* had whetted my appetite. But I was excited as a child when I stood in the corridor to catch a glimpse of that valley before Landeck, up which I had walked with a fellow-student twenty-four years ago on a first post-war Alpine holiday. I felt a sympathetic blister coming on my heel again and hastily changed my position! Then as we came into Innsbruck, there was the Stubai Thal bus waiting at the level-crossing, the bus we took in 1935 with the intention of getting off when we felt like it and staying a week; and so we did with memorable abandon. To my fellow countrymen who have not yet revisited these early haunts I would simply say that the sides of the valley of the Inn have become even more incredibly steep and the woods, which spill down the clefts in the rocks, even more entrancing.*

In the absurd manner of modern European travel I had to cross on my way to Prague, not only two frontiers, but three zones of occupation. The French occupy with a cheerful sense of possession, however temporary — if you have to be stationed in Austria, why not bring the family for a ski-ing holiday? The Americans, who so dislike frontier formalities in Europe, take the business of checking your papers most seriously, like new players who do not wish to miss a move in the game! Of the mysterious Russians I saw nothing at all; perhaps they were about when I went to sleep suddenly and forgot to get my financial paper signed! The British were represented by a trainload of Royal Engineers, doing a Cook's tour of Europe to get to Venice without crossing Switzerland, and very much enjoying the scenery, both feminine and mountainous! It would have cost me much the same to fly to Prague and back, but I should have missed the interest of railway systems. They carry the whole modern history of Europe upon their rails. It is always amusing to detect wagons which have strayed hundreds of miles from their places of origin, and to mark the confusion of languages chalked upon their sides. But now there is the additional excitement of occupation or reparation grab! The Swiss have columns of wagons in the sidings at the frontier station

of Buchs, wisely labelled "not to leave the country!" Every country's property is confused and the subterfuges of appropriation by means of paint and metal plates are entertaining. I was reminded of the horse we stole in 1918 and kept out of view until its coat had grown to cover the branded mark of the artillery! Another aspect of the same situation of change was that in the international dining-cars we were forbidden to smoke in Italian and French, but German had been carefully expunged. It was a legacy of the immediate post-war desire to pretend that there were no Germans.

Czechoslovakia revisited

Crossing into Czechoslovakia the train wandered through rolling country deep in snow. The pheasants and the hares looked at us disconsolately, tamed by the disappearance of the accustomed undergrowth. The towns had all an air of recovery, save one or two which, with the departure of their former German inhabitants, stood sadly empty. Before you comment too sharply upon the absurdity of leaving homes empty by the score in Czechoslovakia, and increasing the terrible overcrowding of Germany, wait till you have visited the Spielberg Castle in Brno. The wind was bitter, and the slush deep on the ground as we climbed the hill and dived into the underground fortifications. To chill of body was added an almost unbearable chill of spirit. Through dismal and inhuman corridors we filed to see the Habsburg prison-cells and torture-chambers. Such things are always gruesome, yet the visitor can treat lightly privation and pain which is centuries old. But here — like a palimpsest upon an obscene parchment of the past, — the ghastly cruelty of two or three years ago can be plainly read. And as you slowly realise that the wives and children of these martyrs still live in the city below, the mind becomes charged with horror, and the Russian inscription bidding you take note, and plan vengeance, makes a kind of perverse sense. A chapel with its altar desecrated and the eagle and the Hakenkreutz in place of the Cross is a terrible reminder of modern paganism. It has not been restored — perhaps still to remind a rising generation of the reality of evil, perhaps more truly because there is no deep religious passion to raise again the symbols of grace and mercy in that foul and pitiless place.

After all that happened in their country the Czech people show remarkable power of readjustment and practical commonsense.

That they are situated on the border between Eastern and Western Europe is a fact so obvious that its constant repetition becomes banal. And yet it is a fact of such astonishing complexity and extreme importance that it has to be constantly studied and pondered upon. The opposite of a totalitarian system seems still to be a multiple system of political parties. Just because of the experiences the people have gone through, party political excitement is universal in Czechoslovakia. National unity through the free expression of all differences is a difficult aim, but only so can liberty be conserved, and this is a land where liberty is loved.

I spoke of the Czech people, not because I had forgotten that this is one republic of Czechs and Slovaks, but because a visit to Bratislava showed me how different had been the experience of war in the two parts of the country. The coinage itself indicates the problem — first the old crowns of the first Czechoslovakian Republic, second the two sets of crowns of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and the Slovakian Republic, third the crown of the second Czechoslovakian Republic. All the coins are in circulation and so are the corresponding memories of men and women. The task of rebuilding national life, so amazingly well begun, is one in which all freedom-loving men will wish the Czechoslovakian people well.

For part of my journey I had an engineer as my companion, who was responsible for the state of bridges all over the republic. He expressed a good deal of concern at the strain which spring floods would impose upon them. "Many of them were rebuilt too quickly, and they cannot be expected to last" was his comment. I reflected that sometimes those of us who were not in occupied Europe during the war may seek to build bridges too quickly — in one direction or another. Between the peoples they must be built again with wisdom and on sure foundations. The Czechoslovakian students I met were alive to this task within their own country and beyond its borders. They were, on the one hand, amazingly balanced in their judgments about their German neighbours, and, on the other hand, anxious to understand and interpret present-day Russia. We might help them by ceasing to use "Prague" simply as a symbol of one political tendency in student thought. Czechoslovakian students are democratically minded, and seek to create good relations with East and West. That is why the International Union of Students headquarters is well placed amongst them.

The student movement

In October 1938 and November 1939 I had visited the Czechoslovakian S.C.M., known as the Akademicka Y.M.C.A. In the Travel Diary of the Fourth Quarter 1939 I wrote cryptically of my visit to the student conference at Jimramov in the days of the Protectorate. (I still have the refusal from Berlin and the entry permit for four days from the German consul in Bratislava!) Here is what I wrote then : ...“It was a peculiar pleasure to be with Czech students again... To sit round a fire on the hill-side and hear songs sung, and poems read, many of them written in the last few months, was an unforgettable experience. Plans were made then, and are now being acted upon, for the kind of Bible study and evangelism which are costly, because they evade no issues”.

It was therefore with mixed feelings of joy and sorrow that I returned. When I met with the Committee in the familiar room in Prague there were the fine Christian faces of Simsa, Valenta, and Mares looking down upon us, men who had been killed in cold blood or who had died in concentration camps for their patriotism. This did not give an air of sadness to the room, but an air of distinction. One felt that the movement had been tested and come through. Now there would always be a knowledge of the stand which Christians must take and an earnest search for the faith which alone makes such a stand possible. The gap in pre-war leadership has made it difficult to rebuild the movement, and it is, as it were, feeling for position. But the Akademicka Y.M.C.A. has always been rich in former members, just because it has always created a deep Christian fellowship out of very diverse elements, and I was greatly impressed by the active cooperation of different generations in the conduct of its life. No national movement has ever felt more closely involved in the Federation's life, and its unconventional, pioneering, generous spirit is abundantly needed in these more confessional and churchly days!

New contacts for the Federation

In Prague and Brno I visited largely the Akademicka Y.M.C.A. but in Bratislava I was to meet the Kuzmany Circle with which we had no contacts before the war, but which is now entering our

Federation fellowship. Indeed an Evangelical Union has been formed with two other groups of Church origin in Prague and Brno. It was refreshing in Bratislava to have a crowded meeting with people standing out of sight in the corridors — an experience I have only had in another Lutheran setting in Finland in 1945. With all my Czechoslovakian audiences I had an instant sense of friendly response, but in Bratislava the gallant efforts of my student interpreters in speech and discussion added an intimacy which even a common language could not have conveyed. The lack of such a language produced its most amusing result when I found myself confusing two study groups — one on the Ten Questions for Oslo and the other on the Ten Commandments! In Bratislava they are happily not considered as being identical!

As we talked on and on in Brno until my night train left, the impression was finally confirmed that in Czechoslovakia two sides of our work could really be united. Too often one meets either a definitely Christian group which has little sense of wider problems and few contacts, or a group of less dogmatic conviction but more alive to the real needs of their fellows and the necessity of Christian action. When both these tendencies can be developed in collaboration you have a student Christian movement in the noblest sense. Czechoslovakia is the most strategic country in Europe to build such a Christian witness and, though the process of co-ordinating the independent activities of the Akademicka Y.M.C.A. and the U.C.E.A. will require charity and imagination, within the next year or two it can be done.

The long hard winter was ending as I turned westwards. The Sunday crowds had gathered to watch the ice breaking on the great river which sweeps beneath the towering palaces of Prague. Out in the country I saw long thin reed-grasses waving again above the snow, too slender to be broken; in Austria the sun shone brilliantly upon the loosening waterfalls, and the saplings in the woods began to stretch their backs, bent double with the snow. The station-masters' red caps looked pleasantly spring-like, and I felt sure the crocuses could not be far behind. Europe is not too sad for hope, which comes with spring.

R. C. M.

THE STUDENT WORLD CHRONICLE

American Student Democracy in Action

Informal comments by a European visitor.

I was familiar with the letters U.S.C.C., and I had also some knowledge of how it was organised and what it was supposed to do. But it was quite different to live together for some days with about hundred students, who constituted the United Student Christian Council in the U. S. A. at its third annual meeting, at Racine, Wisconsin. To give my final impression right away : it was not only, or primarily, some sort of superstructure or machinery, a matter of budget and allocation of places ; it was in itself an extremely interesting piece of student Christian life. It is a rather complex type of life. Of the student members with right to vote 27 places are reserved for the student branches of Y.W.C.A. and Y.M.C.A., other interconfessional movements have a few places, and then the Church-related student groups have 36. In addition to that come 39 places for the executive secretaries of these and other organisations, local staff and faculty members ; together with the officers it makes a total figure of 111. And this whole group at Racine worked together according to the most democratic conception of American democracy. It was a real experience to see it work, and work so well. But I must admit that more than once I asked myself, how much was due to the excellent chairman? In this setting the students felt at home. And at once I understood in a new way their embarrassment during our Federation General Committee in Geneva last summer. Democracy in the U.S.A. and in Europe have not the same traditions. And this difference is felt more clearly today after the experience of the years of occupation in so many European countries. During those years you could not elect your leaders in the old way ; those who had the vision and saw what had to be done, and how it had to be done, naturally became the leaders. And probably we feel that even today we need this "aristocratic" element in our struggling, post-war democracies. One thing struck me at Racine: the women students took a much more active and responsible part in the discussions than I had been accustomed

to. I have in mind, for instance, a panel, where the women who took part in it made definitely the most illuminating and constructive contribution. One of the probable reasons is that so many of the men were away in the fighting forces, that the women had to take over leadership in the various types of student organisations. Anyhow, I felt that our S.C.M. in many European universities is made one-sided and poorer from the lack of a real participation by women students.

A number of the students and leaders had taken part in meetings in Europe during the summer, and their reports and impressions were discussed. It was a dark and gloomy picture that was painted: poverty, disunity, frustration, hopelessness. Clearly they had also sensed a difference in the Christian message, a different theological approach. To American minds it seemed that European Christians had less expectation for the future of Christianity, that they were centering more around the final victory and lordship of Christ, — in spite of all. Seen from the American angle this difference had new perspectives for me. To what extent was it the European political failure and bankruptcy which had been projected into the realm of theology, and compensated for there?

It had been thought-provoking for the American students to realise with what a minimum of comfort people in Europe had to live, — live and even find and develop new values. Once more we have learnt a lesson about the difference between the superficial and the truly valid aspects of culture. One costs money, the other struggle. And what is more — exactly under these conditions of misery, of pressure of all kinds, of persecution and imprisonment, God revealed Himself as the Real, the Powerful and the Glorious.

The World's Student Christian Federation took a central place in the reports and deliberations. It was the unanimous opinion that it comprised a number of charming and inspiring, challenging and impressive persons. Discussion arose about what it lacked, based on the (rather inadequate) judgments from the General Committee at Bossey. It was said that it lacked the "spark". But the difficulty was to make clear and define what this spark was. The delegates realised that they had come to this General Committee with enormous expectations; one

of the women students put it this way: "I had expected the General Committee would be the greatest experience of my life, but it wasn't". The hours which followed were spent in an interesting discussion on why they had been disappointed, and whether they had been disappointed; what they had been looking for, and what they had missed. One of them, it seemed to me, pointed to a central thing when he said: "We were really seeking the core of our faith". That process of search and clarification has continued, and a visible result of it was a *Statement of Christian Faith*, which was worked out during the National Assembly of the Student Christian Association Movement (the student sections of Y.W.C.A. and Y.M.C.A.) which was held in Illinois in the end of December 1946.

I felt that there was considerable truth in what one of the elder U.S.C.C. delegates said, that some of the younger General Committee representatives had been looking for action, resolutions and dramatic moments, and there were few (but important) resolutions, and no dramatic moments. But probably that does not say everything. It was a real challenge when somebody said that it had been rather difficult to get to know these new friends in Geneva, more so than at the student congress in Prague. "It was difficult because of this distinction between the age-levels. We did not take time to get to know one another in the things which are eternal", one of them said. I felt there was something in that which we should keep in mind for the next time we meet in international student Christian conferences. Remarks about our Bible study at the Gwatt Conference confirmed this for me: "We felt that Bible study kept us together, and made clear to us our common basis. And it was through Christian fellowship that we began to understand international fellowship".

The various reports and discussions, the critical as well as the enthusiastic, made quite clear the underlying concern and responsibility and loyalty towards the Federation! With all its charm and its weakness it is *our common Federation*, and we are called upon to serve in it with our thoughts and prayers, our time and money.

Two things were quite clear to me when I left the U.S.C.C. meeting at Racine, firstly there was "something" about those

who had taken part in Christian student work in its full world-wide aspect, those who had some Federation experience, which made their contribution to the meeting indispensable. And secondly, I was convinced that U.S.C.C. had a great task to fill, because it had a purpose and a function. I believe the chairman was on the right lines, when he pointed out that the most fruitful approach to the U.S.C.C. was this *functional* one. Primarily it should be considered as an instrument for bringing American Christian students fully into the Federation, and for bringing the Federation to them, which is one of the most interesting and most important tasks within our W.S.C.F. today.

ANDREAS SCHANKE.

De Universitate

One of the great gaps in the discussion in the Federation about the relation of Christianity to knowledge and the University is the lack of any creative thinking about *science*. Yet when the final judgment on the history of the past two hundred years is written there is not doubt that it will be apparent that one of the greatest, and probably *the* greatest, contribution of our epoch to the culture and development of mankind has been science. The Church and Christians generally have scarcely begun to absorb the implications of this fact.

Therefore, we are glad to present the following two documents. The first one was written against the background of the thinking of the British S.C.M. Commission on the University. I hope that some readers who are stimulated by it will communicate their reactions to Geneva. The second article describes an interesting practical step forward in Greece.

A.J.C.

The Mythology of Science

It seems that men have always linked their beliefs about the ultimate nature of things with the current picture of the world given by science. Thus, before the sixteenth century there

was no reason to doubt that the earth was the centre of the universe, and this was linked with the religious belief that man was the central figure of creation. Before the nineteenth century there was no reason to doubt the story of creation in Genesis, and this was even more firmly linked with the belief in the transcendence of God and the spiritual nature and fall of man. These facts call for some reflection on the contemporary scientific account of the world, and its relation to belief in the Christian gospel. The immediate effect of science on faith is often the denial that there can be any certain knowledge not derived from the scientific method, but men cannot live for long on this type of positivism, and inevitably the basic results of science are extended into a more satisfying mythology.

What then is the impression given to the layman of the position of science today? It can be summarised roughly in the following points:

1. The earth is a small planet attached to a medium-sized star of the Milky Way.
2. Life first appeared in the form of simple one-celled creatures and by the process of evolution plants, animals, and eventually man, emerged, man's chief advantage in the struggle for existence being apparently his larger brain.
3. Primitive man learned to live in groups, and to maintain the stability of his societies he developed science, art, ethics and religion.
4. The development by men of civilised life and civilised values has been largely determined by social and psychological factors.
5. In some millions of years this planet will become uninhabitable due to the cooling of the sun, and eventually the whole universe will have dissipated its energy, and no further change will take place.

According to the positivists this, or something like it, is the only sure knowledge about the world we can ever have, and we should not ask any further questions. But it is in the nature of man not to be satisfied with an account which leaves out everything he wants to know, and no one can live and act in the world without assuming, perhaps unconsciously, some answer

to more ultimate questions. What were the inevitable conclusions that were drawn from this cosmology by men who wanted to know what their lives meant?

The answer is complicated by a certain amount of residual Christianity. Christian ethics and a belief in the value of the individual are still widely accepted, except in countries where another explicit philosophy has arisen. But a mythology based on science alone must regard man as the result of purely natural processes, and must take an evolutionary view of history, making it ultimately meaningless, whatever is said about the worth of men's temporary achievements. Failure to establish a stable social order or a satisfying personal life is thought to be due to various irrational factors and to ignorance. The solution lies in more education and a more objective, i.e. scientific, approach. The scientists have the knowledge that will save us, and are regarded with the awe previously evoked by witches and medicine men.

Thus modern man has lost all sense of his transcendence over the cosmic process, and seems content to regard himself as a mere episode in a purposeless universe which is quite indifferent to him. Incidentally, there is a contradiction in this view, because the scientific planners themselves are regarded as so far transcending the cosmic process that they can understand it, if not actively change it. But the naturalism accepted by the ordinary man makes him an easy prey to totalitarian philosophies which seem to restore purpose, not to his individual life — he has lost hope of that — but to his life as a member of a particular race or state. Thus the fundamentally unsatisfying mythology derived from science is seen to be at least part of the cause of the success of the new mythologies which reject science itself. It is true that Marxism claims to be scientifically based and it is in fact the only modern philosophy which has had any success in integrating technical achievement with a faith for living, but in practice it refuses to allow science its essential freedom to develop independently of any integrating philosophy.

Some of the younger scientists in the West are realising the inadequacy of the old positivism, and are trying to show how art, ethics and religion can flourish in an entirely objective and pre-suppositionless culture. But they have no ultimate basis for

science itself. The scientific virtues are by no means self-evident, and it is in the rejection of all objectivity that the danger of our time lies. Science cannot live any longer on its own capital, and the problem becomes, not Christianity versus science, but Christianity, incorporating the achievement of science, and providing a justification for it, versus the new irrationalism. It is even possible that a dogmatic version of Christianity itself might effectively destroy science.

All this makes a re-examination of the scientific account of the world from the Christian point of view vitally necessary. As long as science itself flourishes the scientific cosmology will obviously retain its hold on the popular mind, but equally as long as it does, Christianity expressed as it is at present will make no headway. Christians must accept science as a positive achievement, and one that is in accordance with the will of God for men, but the question has to be faced — Is science merely a means of giving men power over the world, or does it give significant knowledge about the nature of the world?

Christians may say that the results of science are irrelevant to faith, and that as there is no finality in science any attempt at a synthesis is dangerous. Or it may be that the attempt should be made, although it must take account of the changing character of scientific knowledge. The first alternative is supported by the relativism current among some scientists, who no longer claim to be making significant statements about the nature of the world, but only to be predicting events that are empirically verifiable. It is questionable whether any great scientific theory is ever developed without some faith on the part of the scientist that he is approximating to a truth which is independent of his own mind, and it seems as if scientists themselves need some ultimate religious assurance of a truth beyond themselves if the immediate relativities of science in its present state are not to discourage them. If it is felt that an integration is at present impossible, the divorce between religious beliefs and the prevailing method of thinking must continue for Christians. The scientist thinks it is dishonest, and the ordinary man agrees with him. It means that there is no hope of any large-scale return to Christianity, and the danger of totalitarian substitutes for both science and Christianity remains.

Anyway it is unlikely that the two fundamental conceptions of man and of history described above will change however the scientific superstructure may be transformed by advances in knowledge. In so far as the new conceptions fit the facts in a way the old ones did not, it can be said that they are at least approximations to significant truth, and this trust in empirical evidence can itself be justified on a Christian understanding of the natural world. It is at this fundamental level rather than at the level of details that the re-interpretation must take place. As an example, it is not suggested that Genesis should be re-written to fit modern biology and anthropology, but that it should be shown how a concept of history which derives its meaning from one event within it can include the evolutionary conception.

There are plenty of indications of how the re-integration might take place. More work needs to be done on the suggestions that science owes its origin to the influence of a Christian outlook, and the "materialism" of Christianity ought to help us to see the place of science in a Christian view of the world. The problem of how this view includes and transcends the scientific one must be solved if Christianity is to regain any hold on the popular mind, and the need for re-interpretation *in popular terms* is urgent. Certainly it cannot be done on the intellectual level alone: perhaps integration must first be achieved in the lives of those Christians who are called to be scientists.

MARY HESSE.

A Greek Declaration

This statement was signed by one hundred and eighty-one men of learning at Christmas 1946. It is taken from Aktines, the monthly publication of the Christian Association of Professional Men.

We, the undersigned workers in scientific research and in the field of letters in Greece, consider it our obligation to declare publicly, too, our conviction regarding the direction which the Greek people must follow in respect to the great and basic problems of life, so that they may be able to overcome the difficulties

of these times and to achieve both the spiritual and the material regeneration of the Nation.

From the objective and impartial research in the science to the development of which each one of us has dedicated his powers ; from contact with the life of letters, of art, of civilisation in general ; from observation of the general experience of men, more especially in these latter years, we have arrived at the following conclusion :

1. The future of mankind and, more specifically of our own country too, depends first and foremost upon the laying of true and unshakable spiritual foundations for the life of contemporary man, whereby alone is it possible for true civilisation to exist.

2. Such a foundation cannot be laid, if the man of today fails to use that treasure of values which Christianity, the Christian faith and Christian ethics hold out to him. Estrangement from these values constitutes an abandonment of every well-grounded hope that mankind will be able to build up a future better than the present.

3. Furthermore, such estrangement from Christian values is contrary to the conclusions of truly unprejudiced critical research into the great problems which are fundamental to man ; and more especially to the conclusions being reached by contemporary scientific research, as carried on within the sphere truly proper to science, by strictly scientific methods and in a genuinely scientific spirit. Equally in the exact sciences, in physics and biology, as in other sciences, the progress of contemporary research has demonstrated that the attempt to make it appear that science belies Christian faith is without any scientific support. No one has the right to involve science on the plane whereon stand the great metaphysical questions and to employ the name and the prestige of science to support attacks against the Christian faith. On the other hand, departure from Christian standards, ostensibly in the name of Art and of artistic creation in general, not only is not dictated by any necessity or utility relating to genuine artistic creation, but, on the contrary, constitutes a dire blow delivered against Art, displaces it from the place of leadership which is becoming to Art in a genuine civilisation.

4. The series of failures and disappointments which is typical of modern times has made it clear that the urgent demand for complex social and economic reconstruction, for the rule of law and justice, of ethics, and of the principles of social justice, can achieve realisation only when the life of individuals and the life of society is saturated with the Faith whereon Christianity is built — when the moral imperative, based on this Faith, attains within the soul of modern man that effective power which befits it. Without this power even the noblest longings and the forms which in theory are best-conceived, become chimerical and lead to cruel disappointments.

5. Finally, the education of the individual, especially the upbringing of children and the culture of youth, in so far as it is not based upon full respect towards Christian values, leads of necessity to failure, to the spiritual undernourishment of the rising generation, and to a crippled moral condition. By contrast, the Christian ideal of education will supply the basis and the hope of success to every truly progressive effort for successfully solving the problem of educating contemporary man.

These conclusions coincide with the turn observable in modern science and in thought in general, a turn constantly manifested in the most solemn manner through the lips of first-class contemporary scientists and in general workers of the mind throughout the world. Independently of what was done in other times, today science no less than living recent art, well knows how to respect the Christian faith and its unsurpassable creative value. The Greek people must have in mind this development, and must no longer give credence to obsolete views on the relation of science to the Christian faith and to Christian ethics. They must know too, that return to the Christian faith — that faith wherewith the very substance of our Nation and twenty centuries of history have been interwoven — not only is in complete harmony with the conclusions of the progress of modern science, but also constitutes the one unique guarantee for the solution of the stupendous problems with which these days confront us, the most urgent behest for our life and for our future.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE REBIRTH OF THE GERMAN CHURCH, by STEWART HERMAN.
Student Christian Movement Press, London, 10s. 6d : Harper
and Brös, New York.

Less than two years ago the German Church was still a 'silent' church in at least one sense of the word. Its voice — if it had a voice — did not reach the rest of Christendom ; its prayers, sermons and pronouncements, to say nothing of its deepest thoughts and experiences, were all but unknown abroad. And then with the collapse of Hitler's Reich the silence was abruptly ended. The German Church could again speak freely to all the world. Or it might be truer to say that German Churchmen could speak freely, for in the chaos of the immediate post-war situation it was easier for those abroad to catch the words of outstanding individuals or particular synods than to recognise one common authoritative message of the German Church to its sister-churches in the world. And despite much that has happened since — the formation at Treysa of the new Evangelical Church in Germany (EKID), the Stuttgart Declaration and the entry of the German church into the full life of the World Council of Churches — there is still widespread ignorance and misunderstanding in many quarters even where a keen desire to know and appreciate exists. It is not surprising that it should be so. The German ecclesiastical pattern was complicated enough before the Church struggle against the Nazis arose to cut across the old lines of division with new groupings. Add to this the German habit of describing actions and convictions in a theological language (the very translation of which presents formidable difficulties), and the fact that what the German Church is saying now is charged with the intense experience it gained in its life-and-death struggle waged largely in isolation from the rest of Christendom — add all this and it is not to be wondered at that speech is sometimes as little illuminating as silence. The danger is that at a time when a free ecumenical traffic in experience

between the Christians of Germany and those of the rest of the world is imperative — for the sake of the World Church and its witness to the Gospel in every sphere of life — the process may be thwarted by the sheer inability of both sides to make themselves understood through ignorance of the background from which the other speaks. Un-understanding good-will can be as perilous as suspicion or indifference.

It is in this respect that Stewart Herman's book is a work of major importance. It is not a tidy book — no book written on this subject within a year of the Nazi collapse and describing a situation so chaotic as that in Germany in 1945-1946 could have been tidy. Nor does it make any claim to be complete. What it does however is to take the reader right into the heart of the German scene and to introduce him to Christian leaders — pastors, professors and laymen — at the moment when they were called on to assume more terrifying burdens of responsibility than Christian leaders have ever had to carry anywhere. All the problems of outward ruin, fleeing populations and the complete dislocation of normal life had to be faced. At the same time these men were taking over the official and administrative leadership of the churches from the German-Christian pastors whom the Nazis had installed. Along with their Roman Catholic colleagues they had to stand before the occupying powers as the representatives of the only German institution which had survived the Nazi collapse, a position which demanded from them the greatest judgment both in respect to the Allied authorities and to the now leaderless German people, whose needs, before the setting up of civil administrations, could alone be voiced by the Church. All these tasks had to be performed in an atmosphere of total insecurity and uncertainty. As one enters into the complexities of their problems through Stewart Herman's pages one is astonished not that they made mistakes or said the "wrong thing", which they sometimes did, but rather that they displayed such indomitable faith. If Stewart Herman had not written this book with its wealth of incident, quotation, illustration and accompanying background information, it would have been almost impossible for the English-speaking churches to have understood how the German Church today lives and what spirit it breathes.

The book however is more than merely an account of the efforts of German church leaders in the year following the end of the war. As the author says in his preface, "It has been written... for those who are thinking about the united Churches", and he has not hesitated to try to find answer to many of the questions that have been asked by Christians in the outside world concerning the past record and present programme of the Evangelical Church, nor to comment on answers which have been given. The second chapter deals with the Church struggle against the Nazis and the differing interpretations of it given by different groups within Germany. The Lutheran south and the United (Lutheran-Reformed) north — to use very rough generalisations — pursued different courses which throw light not only on the vexed question of German Lutheranism's attitude to secular power but also on the burning question of the moment, the formation of a United Lutheran Church within the Evangelical Church as a whole. Another chapter contains the text of the secret Gestapo document on the position of German Protestants in 1938 and an all-too-brief account of the protests addressed by official church bodies to the State between 1933 and 1944. One can only echo the author's hopes that a collection of German Church resistance documents will be published in English. In a following chapter the question of prayers offered in war-time and "Christian" messages emanating from formerly enemy nations is discussed in an ecumenical setting, but it is regrettable that the problem of the conflicting loyalties of Christians within the modern state, as illustrated by the dilemma of young German church "resisters" who found themselves called to fight in the German army, is not developed as one might have hoped. On the other hand the relations of the German Churches with the Allied authorities and their denazification policy is treated with great frankness and understanding, and in a long chapter *The Church repents and reforms* divergent German utterances on guilt, collective responsibility and repentance are closely examined in the light of realities existing inside Germany which condition and influence the discussion of the *Schuldfrage*. What emerges amid all the hesitations and explanations of many is the clear and overwhelming conviction of the real spiritual leaders that only by repentance and by the full

acceptance by each individual of collective responsibility within the nation and the church can there be a *rebirth* of the Evangelical Church. The choice is *restoration* or *regeneration*. This is the key to the German Church situation today, and for the leaders of the new church it means the same choice as between self-excuse and radical repentance. In this struggle the Student Christian Movement in Germany has ranged itself unreservedly on the side of the present leadership and seeks to fulfil the vocation which it found in the years of the Church struggle — to be the “congregation” (*Gemeinde*) of Christ within the University, calling students to repentance and new life through the Word of God. Though *The Rebirth of the German Church* omits all reference to the work of the Movement, all who read the book and who have followed even at a distance the disastrous course of events in Germany during the last year will have some understanding of how difficult the task of the student *Gemeinde* is. But they will also know the strength of the faith which the reborn German Church has been given, and they will be able both to pray for it with far greater understanding and to enter into that ecumenical traffic of experience with it of which we spoke earlier and which is still just beginning. Stewart Herman has put us all very deeply in his debt.

ERIC M. DUNCAN.

FREEDOM AND CONTROL — A CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION.
By E. V. NEWMAN S.C.M. Press. 6s.

This little book was written by a former leader of the Australian S.C.M. and member of the W.S.C.F. General Committee who is now principal of Tubon College on the Island of Tonga in the South Pacific. This is perhaps not the most obvious place from which we would expect a book of its title to issue forth ; so it is interesting to notice that the author says “My chief indebtedness for the stimulus of thought is not to any small number of men or books. It is to the corporate life of a Student Christian Movement, both national and international.”

The great merit of this little book is that it presents a vision of the great richness of community living which Christ has opened up to us and which it is the duty of Christians to seek

to enshrine in concrete ways in society. Thus Newman writes : "A Christian basis of society requires that the individual in all his contacts with society should meet personal values and a personal reaction to himself. Our belief in God means that the ultimate reality in our environment, even in the apparently impersonal operation of nature, is personal... if the Christian faith is true, then that personal character of the environment should become evident throughout the whole range of human relationships, and the attempt to give it expression becomes one of the practical and ultimately practicable, Christian duties."

In discussing the question which is suggested by his title the author makes the point that the choice before us is not control *or* freedom, but control by power groups on which we have no influence, *or* control by the community in which we are active units. We never have absolute freedom. The author moves from this to an interesting and, to my mind, a convincing criticism of the profit-motive. He announces that he is himself a socialist.

The author finds the citadel of freedom in the Church in a "company of men and women who judge all things by a spiritual and eternal standard". Such is the final and impregnable fortress and shrine of liberty. This is a thesis which the reviewer first read in John MacMurray's *The Challenge to the Churches*. Newman quotes in this connection the moving statement of Luther "My conscience is thirled to the word of God, and it is neither safe nor honest to act against one's conscience. God help me! Amen". As he writes the reviewer is in Norway and cannot fail to praise God that He raised up here, in these past years, men who fearlessly faced their oppressors in the same strength which was Luther's. We have indeed witnessed during the war years a striking confirmation of Mr. Newman's argument.

Though the author does not throw any brilliant light on the concrete practical steps which a particular country must now take, he does present, in a brief, clear fashion which will appeal to many students, some of the basic considerations which should guide and inspire Christians as they seek to assist at the birth of the new civilisation which seems to be painfully coming into being.

A.J.C.